

THE
PAMPHLETEER,

No. I.

ESSAY ON BAPTISM.

The Elder unto the *elect lady* and HER CHILDREN whom I love in the truth.
2 JOHN 1

RICHMOND:

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PREMONITION.

THE design of the publication here commenced is, in a series of pamphlets, to awaken the attention of the public to several subjects which it is thought have not been sufficiently examined. The Discipline, Doctrine and Order of the church of Jesus Christ will be discussed with a view to christian practice, and the true interests of society connected with them. In these discussions, there will frequently occur a statement of points, in which christians differ. But if any expect to find the fierce and acrimonious spirit of a polemic they will be disappointed. Indeed although the object of the publication, in some of its parts, is to afford an exposition and vindication of the discipline and order of a particular church, it is intended at the same time to show that the differences which exist among christians ought not to prevent their holding communion together as disciples of a common Lord. In fact the great purpose is to promote truth and charity. The intention of the Editor is pure—What his success may be, he pretends not to predict. For this he looks to Heaven; and as to the merit of the work, he leaves it to the public to decide.

No regularity in this publication can be promised—The Nos. will appear as suits the convenience of the Editor: regard however, will be paid to the demands of the public. Uniformity in page, paper and type will be preserved, so that the several numbers may be bound in volumes as the proprietors may like best.

SCHEME OF THE FOLLOWING ESSAY.

I. **THE** terms Baptism and Baptise are explained. And it is shown that, in general usage, they are indeterminate in signification; but that in a religious sense, they comprehend both an external rite, and the discipline, with its effects on the heart and in the life represented by that rite, pa. 1-8.

II. It is proposed to show that baptism is to be administered to those who profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him; and that infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ are to be baptised, pa. 10.—Proposition 1st—briefly considered, because no dispute on the subject, pp. 10-11. Proposition 2d—namely, that the child of a believing parent ought to be baptised, considered at large, and proved, 1. By the analogy between the constitution of nature and of the church; the condition of children in each case being connected with that of their parents, pp. 11-13.—2. By showing that the church was organized in the family of Abraham, that the initiatory rite from the beginning had a spiritual signification, that this rite was applied to the children of church-members, and that when the church was placed on its christian foundation, no change was made in this respect, pp. 13-27 —3. By examining the commission given to the apostles, when christian baptism was instituted, and enquiring into the extent in which they would receive and execute it; from which it appears that the apostles, having always been accustomed to see children admitted into the visible church, would naturally apply baptism as an initiating ordinance to them, pp. 28-34.—4. By examining the record concerning the practice of the apostles, from which it appears to be a positive and unquestionable fact that they baptised the families of believers; and indeed, that such baptism was a common occurrence, and that, in circumstances rendering it utterly incredible that there were no young children—particularly it is shown, that the word

rendered *household* was the direct, proper, and unequivocal term to express children; and that the sense of it in the connection in which it stands, makes it more clear that they were baptised, than if it had been said, the apostles baptised Lydia and her children, pp. 34-63.—5. By the express and repeated testimony of the primitive Fathers of the Church, that they received the practice of baptising children from the apostles, pp. 64-69.—It is then proved from scripture, particularly the passage 1 Cor. vii. 14, that if *one* of the parents is a believer, the baptism of the children is authorised and required, pp. 70-74.

III. In the concluding part of the work the mode of administration is considered, and it is undertaken to be proved that, *Dipping the person into the water is not necessary; but that baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water on the person.* This is proved, 1. By showing that the original word is indeterminate as it is used by Greek writers in general, and that Lexicographers give to it *σέψις* a different significations. 2. By an examination of every passage in the N. Testament in which the words baptise and baptism occur; from which it appears that in no single instance it is evident that baptism was performed by immersion, and in some instances it is manifest that this was not the case, as in the baptism of Paul and the Jailor, pp. 74 to the conclusion.

In this Essay the utmost care has been taken to avoid harsh expressions, and every thing that could reasonably give offence. The words to plunge, to submerge, and submersion, have been several times introduced merely because it has been supposed by some that immersion does not adequately express the idea intended to be conveyed by those who use it, and contend for that mode of administering the rite under consideration. This remark is here introduced to prevent the supposition even, that there was any intention of speaking lightly concerning any manner of administering so holy an ordinance. *The Author is incapable of any attempt to turn into ridicule that which his*

fellow christians esteem sacred, however he may disapprove of their practice. He respects their feelings, when he differs from their opinions; and while he wishes to show their error, he prays that grace, mercy and peace may be multiplied unto them, “and all who call on the Lord Jesus Christ, both *their* Lord and *ours*.”

IN looking over the pages of the following pamphlet as they came from the printer, we have seen several little things which we wish altered. They are noted here that the reader may see them, and make the changes if he thinks proper.

There is a sentence, Introduction pa. ii. line 12 and onwards, which does not clearly express the meaning intended: let it be understood thus—“When religion is prevalent, and opinions and rituals, presented as its doctrines and institutions, are received without due inquiry, and without that collision of sentiment, which exercises the understanding, &c.

Page 6, line 10, insert *and*, before *referred*.

Page 7, line 4 from bottom, for *right*, read *rite*,

Page 8, line 5, for *he* read *be*.

Page 9, line 15, erase *any*.

—— line 4 from bottom, for *nor* read *or*.

Page 18, line 18, erase the comma after, and insert it before, *is*.

Page 27, line 6 from bottom, for *implied* read *implies*.

Page 37—The reference on this page to “*Facts and Evidences*,” &c., is to be regarded as a marginal reference, and the reader will pass over it as though it was not there; the sentence immediately following it, being a continuation of that which immediately precedes it.

Page 47, line 19, for *lease* read *leave*.

In page 51—Should the reader enquire how the Jailor rejoiced with his family if they were infants; let him answer how it was that God, out of the mouths of BABES and SUCKLINGS perfected praise? Matt. xxi. 16.

In page 52, line 12 from the bottom, *Thessaloma* is printed instead of *Thessalonica*.

Page 55, line 20, for *besere* read *before*.

Page 68.—Respecting the *household* of Stephanas, it ought to have been remarked that as this epistle was written to the Corinthians several years after the baptism of Stephanas' family, it is very possible that some at least of the members, who were baptised when young, might have been old enough at this time to render offices of kindness to the saints. If the preceding explanations fail then, our argument is not invalidated.

Page 73.—The members of the Corinthian church might very well raise a doubt whether they should continue, after conversion, to live with idolatrous *husbands* or wives. There were many Jews amongst them; and we all know what the Jewish law and the Jewish prejudices were on this subject. Let the reader compare the argument on this page with the ix. and xth chapters of the book of Ezra. He will see at once the reason of the doubt; and that the declaration of the apostle that the "children are holy," that is a seed consecrated to God, settles the question at once.

Page 74—line 8 from bottom, for *considering* read *considering*.

"The Christian religion every where," &c. It is not intended here to insinuate that the ordinances of the church, which may very properly be termed external observances, are trivial; that is, that it is a trifling question whether a man shall observe them or not—But that the outward form or manner of observance is a small matter; Thus whether we sing the version of Sternhold and Hopkins, of Brady and Tate, of Rouse, or Watts, is no affair which ought to separate churches, &c.

Page 78, line 6 from bottom, in some copies for *ha e* read *have*.

Page 84, line 7 for *the people* read *they*; namely, the methodists.

Page 85, No. xxxv. in some copies *baptised* occurs instead of *baptising*.

Page 87, line 3 from bottom, read “ And the high priest arose and said.”

Page 92.—Additional remark on Rom vi. 4, and Col. ii. 11, 12. The rite of burial is different in different countries and in different ages. The Greek and Romans buried their dead bodies and laid up the ashes in urns: The ancient Egyptians embalmed them; and deposited them in buildings prepared for the purpose. The ancient Jews hewed sepulchres in the solid rock, as mentioned in pa. 93. The Hindoos burn their dead, and, if they can, throw the ashes into the Ganges. Now, if *burial in baptism* expresses the mode of administration, what mode is that? It is easy to see that the manner of burying will suggest entirely different ideas to different people.

AN

ESSAY

ON

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

INTRODUCTION.

ALL that concerns the administration of the kingdom of Christ is worthy of attention. The various appointments of the great Head of the Church, are made in wisdom. No institutions are arbitrary; none intended for mere parade and show. Every thing has a reference to practice, and a bearing on the great interests of morality. It is then the duty of Christians to examine for themselves, and ascertain the will of God, respecting the discipline, as well as the doctrine of the Christian Church.

The fact, that on these subjects there is a diversity of opinion among Christians, furnishes no valid objection to the discussion of the points of difference; but rather an argument in favour of such investigation as tends to promote knowledge of the truth among all parties. It is true, that while temperate discussion is at all times proper, it is peculiarly so when brethren differ; and differ too, on points which it is alike the interest of all to determine. But this does not imply that, because men call themselves Christians, they ought not to engage in argument on the peculiarities which separate them. Nor can we see how this sentiment, prevalent as it is, can be supported on any, but

such principles as follow. Either, all parties are right, even when they hold opposite opinions: or the subjects of difference are utterly unimportant, and unworthy of the trouble of enquiry. The first case involves the absurdity, that opposite opinions are true: and the second implies, that the institutions of our Lord are trivial in their nature; a sentiment which no Christian can for a moment admit. While, then, the fierce contentions of angry polemics are to be condemned, liberal enquiry and fair investigation ought to be encouraged.

Another view of the subject ought not to be unnoticed. When religion is prevalent, and its doctrines and institutions are received without due enquiry, and that collision of opinion, which exercises the understanding, the great body of the people soon get into the leading strings of their ministers, their consciences are placed under human control, and they are disposed to yield to the demands of ecclesiastics, what ought to be yielded only to the Lord of conscience. Religion then becomes corrupted, is made an instrument of avarice and ambition, and from the best of heaven's gifts, is perverted to one of the deadliest evils.— As a friend to true religion, to human liberty, and to human happiness, this writer wishes to see a spirit of free and enterprising investigation prevail; and is sorry to observe a disposition to brand with the odious name of controversy, every thing that brings into question any sentiments adopted by any who call themselves christians.

It is readily admitted that every individual has a perfect right to his own opinions on the general subject of religion, and on all its modes and forms. It is a matter between him and his God, as long as he keeps it to himself. But the case is changed as soon as these opinions are made public. Every man then has a right to animadvert on them, and shew them to be false, if he can do so by fair argument. And, indeed, if I know a man's private sentiments, and am persuaded that they are injurious to him, if,

in the way of meekness and charity I can convince him of his error, and persuade him to renounce it, what harm is done?—This remark, it ought to be said, is made with a strong feeling of dislike to all obtrusive and impudent attempts to convert men from what is supposed to be the error of their ways; an utter disapprobation of that blind and headlong zeal, which is ever ready to denounce its blustering anathemas against every man that it designates as a sinner. Meekness and gentleness ought to characterize all attempts to promote religious knowledge. Truth is conscious of her own strength, and advances with all the dignity of calmness and tranquility to the accomplishment of her purposes.

In this Essay, an attempt to promote the truth shall be regulated by the principles stated above. No ill-natured and contentious remarks shall be made on any denomination of christians. What is believed to be agreeable to the will of God, shall be dispassionately stated; and the decision left to every reader. Should the writer succeed in producing strong arguments, and any under their pressure should be disposed to raise a cry of persecution, the candid of all parties will know how to appreciate this; and will not pass censure on one who only vindicates the truth, and opposes what he believes to be error. And should the effort be feeble—*telum imbelli sine ictu*—he hopes that no offence will be taken, at an honest attempt to promote the truth, by those who agree with him; and surely his brethren, who differ in sentiment, will give him credit for all the kindness which he may express, and will not be offended at his failure!

The author of this Essay does not pretend that it is an original work; but rather a compilation. Use has been freely made of various writers on the subject, to whom reference will be made in the proper places. The sole design of the little work here offered to the public, is to give everybody some of the best remarks that have been made on

much controverted subject; arrange them in perspicuous order, and present them in narrow compass and cheap form, for the benefit of those who may please to read. Especially, it was intended to present a manual to christian families, that have not the means of extended research on the subject, and to afford to young enquirers a view of the doctrine and practice, which he judges to be scriptural.

The writer wishes that the public may favourably receive his humble attempt; and he prays that it may be accompanied with the divine blessing, which he knows can alone give success to the labours of man.

Richmond, 25th August, 1819.

ESSAY ON BAPTISM.

IN prosecuting this subject, the observations to be made, shall be distributed into three parts. I. The Nature and Design of Baptism. II. The Subjects of Baptism. III. The Mode of Administering the Ordinance. To which may probably be added, some practical remarks as a conclusion.

PART I.

THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF BAPTISM.

BAPTISM and BAPTISE are Greek words with an English termination. The originals have not been translated in any version of the scriptures to which recourse can now be had. The Vulgate uses *baptismus* and *baptizo*; the French translation, *la baptême* and *baptiser*; the Italian, *battesimo* and *battezzare*; and the English baptism and baptise. The reason why these various translators have chosen to retain the original words is, because they could find none in their languages adequate to the idea of the original. For, in regard to the *external* ordinance, the word *baptism* expresses the application of water or any other fluid in a manner so undeterminate, that none of the terms that are thought to be correspondent to the original, are equally general and comprehensive. And it is unjustifiable to restrict the meaning of a general word to a particular application.

But besides this, there is another reason why these terms have not been translated. Their signification extends beyond the mere designation of an external ordinance, and embraces the great object of that ordinance, as it respects purification from moral defilement, and embuing with the principles of true holiness. Now, neither washing, nor submersion, nor pouring, nor sprinkling, nor any other known

term, except the original, comprehends these several ideas. It is wise, therefore, not to attempt to translate them by a single word, as many are ready to do.

For confirmation of these remarks, let us examine the original.—The primitive word is βαπτω and the primary idea of this is, to stain, to dye, that is to produce such a change of texture, as produces a change of colour. Of this use of the word, many examples might be afforded: a few may suffice. Εβαπτετο δαματι λυμνη the pool was tinged with blood, Homer. βαπτει και ανθιζει την χειρα, it stains and renders florid the hand, Aristotle. Ιμαλιου θεβαμμενον αματι. Rev. xix. 13. In conformity to this signification, words appropriate to the art of dyeing are derived from this theme; thus βαφγη is the act of dyeing, βαφεις is a dyer, βαφικη is the art of dyeing, αβαφος is undyed, Διβαφος is twice dyed, &c. Hence it appears that, to stain or dye, is the radical idea of the word. To this may be added, that to stain or dye is more extensive than to dip or plunge, because the operation of staining may be performed by various modes of applying the colouring matter, as, by sprinkling, effusion, dipping, or submersion; but dipping is one simple action. It is true, however, that as a change of colour is most commonly produced by a long continued immersion, the word βαπτω came to signify to immerse, to dip, to plunge. But then it acquired various other significations, and became very indefinite in its application, signifying as suits the sense to stain, dye, dip, wet, wash, purify. From this word is derived that (βαπτιζω) which is used to express the performance of the sacred rite of baptism. This, as its primitive, is of very general signification, as will appear from the following examples:— 1. from the Septuagint. 2. Kings v. 14, And Naaman went down, και εβαπτισατο εν τω Ιορδανη επτάκις, and washed himself at (or in) the Jordan seven times. This translation is thus justified. In the 10th verse we read that,

Elisha sent a messenger to him saying, Go, (*λῆσαι ἐπλάκας ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ*) wash seven times at or in the Jordan; and the historian adds, he went; and did what? Washed, certainly. Here then the general word, *λῶ* to wash, and *βαπτίζω* to baptize, are equivalent. It may be thought by some, however, that the latter word is intended to designate the particular mode in which the Syrian general executed the prophet's command, namely, by dipping or plunging seven times in the Jordan. But on this it is obvious to remark, that the prophet has allusion to the manner of cleansing a leper, prescribed in the Jewish Law. "Now there were two ways of applying water enjoined by that law; both alike commanded and necessary to his cleansing, viz. *bathing*, and *sprinkling*: the former to be used but *once*; the latter to be done *seven times*. Lev. xiv. 7, 8. Hence it is probable that the prophet did not direct the Syrian captain to immerse or plunge himself seven times in the Jordan, but to perform his ablution in the customary way; that is, by sprinkling.

The next passage in the Septuagint, where the word occurs, is Isai. xxi. 4: the literal version of which is, "And iniquity baptiseth me." This language is so highly figurative, that no prudent reasoner will make any use of it in determining the literal signification of the word. There is a passage, however, in the book of Judith, xii. 7, in which it clearly signifies to wash. "And she went out by night to the valley of Bethulia, and washed herself at a fountain of water in the camp." (*καὶ ἐβαπτίζετο ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ ἐπὶ τῆς πηγῆς τοῦ ὕδατος.*) Here, as was said, we can only render the word by the English term, to wash.—And it seems evident that this washing was not performed by immersion. The same observations may be made on Ecclesiasticus, xxxiv. 25: "He that washeth himself after touching a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing?" (*βαπτίζομενος ἀπὸ νεκροῦ.*)

2. In the next place, some passages in the New Testa-

ment will be considered, with a view of ascertaining the proper meaning of the word, baptism, which, we remind our readers, is a Greek word—Mark vii. 4. “And when they come from market, unless they wash, (βαλίσωνται) they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing (βαπτισμῶς) of cups and pots and brazen vessels, and of tables—Luke xi. 38. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed (ἐβαπτίσθη) before dinner.” These citations shew that the word is used in various passages, where the leading idea is *cleansing* or *purification*, the manner of which is undetermined; only the notion of submersion or plunging, seems to be excluded in several of these cases.

Before we proceed farther, the reader ought to be reminded that the original or root of the word under consideration, signifies to tinge, to dye, to imbue with a colour.—Now it would seem that this idea is implied in the religious use of the word baptise. When our Saviour promises that he will baptise his disciples with the Holy Spirit, he represents, by the use of water in a religious ceremony, the effect of the Spirit in his influences, coming on them, namely giving, so to speak, a new texture to their minds, removing their moral defilement, and *imbuing them with divine knowledge, with holy principles*. It is not easy, without keeping this idea in mind, to understand the common modes of expression adopted by the sacred writers. They very commonly use such phraseology as this for instance, Acts xix. 3, 4. “Into, (or unto) what were ye baptised then? They said, into John’s baptism. And Paul said unto them, John indeed baptised the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe,” &c. Now if we limit the words to the signification of a mere external rite, and suppose that baptism has a restricted signification, say immersion or submersion, what will be the meaning? Paul in this case asks, “Into what then were

ye immersed." When we expect the disciples to answer most naturally, "Into water"—we are utterly disappointed, and are told they were immersed into John's immersion. But this is most manifestly, neither sense nor English. The occasion of Paul's question may help us out of this difficulty. He had asked if the disciples had received the Holy Spirit. They reply that they had not heard of the Holy Spirit.—He immediately asks, into what were ye then baptised; with what doctrines were your minds imbued, that you are ignorant of the Holy Spirit? They answer, we were baptised into John's Baptism—We received the rite from him, and learned his lessons. Paul observes, "John baptised the baptism of repentance," &c.—Now, here, baptism includes, not only the ordinance administered by John, but the system of doctrine taught by him, with which he imbued the minds of his disciples.

This reminds us of one greater than John.—When our Lord instituted baptism, he used language which I can interpret in no other way, than in that just stated.—"Go," said he, "and make disciples of all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost, teaching them," &c. Now, here a similar question occurs.—Baptising—plunging—them into what? Confining the word to mere matters of external observance, would not every reader suppose that the fluid into which all nations should be plunged, would be stated? But no: they are to be baptised into the name of the Father Son and Spirit. But who does not see that it is absurd to talk of being immersed into a name? The word, doubtless here includes the idea of instruction.—Teach them the existence, attributes and offices of Father Son and Spirit, of the effects of which instruction, the ordinance of baptism is a happy representation. The particular words (*βαπτισμος* and *βαπτίζω*.) Baptism and Baptise, were used to designate the sacred ordinance under consideration, because, in their primary sense, they signify to dye, to imbue, and

hence the application of a fluid in any manner, suited to the purpose to be accomplished. The process of dyeing, however, implies a previous cleansing of the thing to be dyed from every extraneous matter, and an application of the colouring substance to it in a state of purity. Now, these complex ideas cannot be expressed by any single term in the English language; the translators of the Bible, then, did well not to render the words by immerse and immersion, wash and washing, or any single terms. They wisely left the word untranslated; referred the true explanation of it to the industry and learning of those whose office it is to expound scripture.

These remarks will help us to the true import of this ordinance. Baptism as an external rite, is the application of water to a fit subject in the name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit. By this ordinance we are taught, 1. That man is a sinful being, and that he must be freed from the moral defilement of sin. 2. That by the blood of Christ and by the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit we are to be freed from sin and made holy. 3. That this event is to be accomplished by the instrumentality of truth communicated to the baptised in the ordinary way of instruction. And to this view of the subject we are lead by the terms used by our Saviour in instituting the ordinance; “Go, and *make disciples* of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit; *teaching* them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

There is another view of this subject which ought to be taken. Baptism is not only a sign, by which the things mentioned are represented to our senses; but it is a *seal* by which the things promised in the word of God are assured to us. It is “a seal of the righteousness of faith.” Now the righteousness of faith is called God’s righteousness; and the phrase implies that glorious plan according to which God enlightens the benighted sinner, grants him repentance unto life, pardons his sins through Jesus Christ, justifies

his person, sanctifies his whole nature, and fits him for Heaven. Now when this seal is applied to any one, it is not for a testimony that *that* person truly believes and is entitled to the blessings of the covenant of mercy—for who then would adventure to administer baptism, without being first invested with the prerogative of searching the heart? But it is God's seal; it is for a testimony on the part of God, that He will perform all that he has promised, that he will give efficacy to the means of his own appointment. The ordinance is intended to confirm the faith of the church in the divine promises, and assure the people of God that the discipline of his church shall not be inefficient for her moral purification; and for imbuing with principles of holiness all, who submit with a teachable temper to this discipline.

The word baptism may also signify the effect produced by the truth which the ordinance represents. In this sense the apostles use such phrases as the following, "We are buried with him by baptism unto death," &c. Rom. vi. 4, In whom also ye are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, being buried with him in baptism. Col. ii. 12. The antitype to which, baptism, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the stipulation (answer) of a good conscience towards God) doth now save us." 1 Pet. iii. 21. Here the thing signified by baptism is called by the name of the rite itself. This is expressly declared by Peter. He had spoken of the deluge, and of the preservation of eight persons by means of water; "In this particular point of view," says he, "there is a resemblance between baptism and the deluge.—Noah was preserved by water—We are saved by baptism; but I do not mean the external rite here, but the thing signified by it; I mean the stipulation of a good conscience, a sincere engagement to be the Lord's. This saves us by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. As surely as Noah and his family

were borne up by the waters and preserved from ruin; as surely as Christ died and rose again, so surely shall they, who are cleansed by his blood and sanctified by his spirit (the thing signified by baptism) be saved."

Hence we see that baptism is intended to be used in the Church of Jesus Christ for the purpose of representing the great truths of Christianity, and strengthening the faith of the Church. It is thus calculated to encourage the diligent use of that discipline which has been established in the church of the Lord Jesus, and the faithful instruction of all who have been initiated into the school of Christ.

These few remarks, while they serve in some degree to explain the nature and design of baptism, show that it was intended to be perpetual. We are as much under the influence of the objects of sense, as the primitive christians were; these objects, when used to represent spiritual things, are as well calculated as ever, to bring them home to us with a powerful impression; and in this day, we as much need the benefits of this ordinance as they did of old. The reason of the institution, then, still continues.—Besides, to the words of institution, our Saviour annexes a promise, which shews that he had in view, not only the apostles, but those who should succeed them; "Lo, I am with you, always, even unto the end of the world." But further, the apostles, during the whole course of their ministry, at least as far as the record goes, administered baptism; and there is not an intimation in scripture that the rite should be discontinued. In one case, (see Acts x. —) we know that Peter baptised a company of persons after the Holy Spirit had descended on them. And this shows that the ordinance was not a mere emblem, to be used only until the doctrine of the Holy Spirit should be more fully understood. In truth, every man who is authorised to go forth and preach the gospel, as a minister of Jesus Christ, is authorised to administer baptism. And if it is his duty to do this, it is the duty of the people to submit to the ordinance.

But it ought to be understood, that there is no mysterious virtue in this rite, in consequence of which grace is bestowed. A person in a state of condemnation, immediately before baptism, is in a state of condemnation immediately after. In other words, baptism does not confer grace. This is evident, in the case of Simon Magus—although baptised by the hands of an apostle, he was afterwards declared to be “in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity.” Baptism is a part of that great system of instrumentality which God has appointed for the recovery of man from sin, and his everlasting salvation.—And when employed, according to the intention of the Head of the Church, there is reason to expect his blessing.

This remark is offered, because superstitious notions concerning the efficacy of any external observances have done, and are calculated to do unspeakable mischief in the world and in the church. Mere outward things are substituted for repentance, faith, and holy-living; a vain confidence is generated, and men believe that they are regenerated, and in the favour of God, when in fact—they have only complied with a ceremony! But it ought to be laid to heart, that nothing will secure our salvation, but that regeneration and purity which baptism represents. We must be born of the Spirit, or we never shall see the kingdom of God. We may administer and receive ordinances in the true apostolic mode, (if that can be ascertained,) and yet have no part nor lot in the salvation of God. For saith our blessed Saviour, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven.”

PART II.

THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

Having very briefly enquired into the nature of baptism; the next question is, "To whom is baptism to be administered?" The answer given to the question in the Assembly's Catechism, contains what is believed to be the truth; according to scripture: "Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers to the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them, professing faith in Christ and obedience to him; are, in that respect, within the covenant, and are to be baptised."

Respecting the first general proposition contained in the answer, it is observed, that it is supported by the practice of the apostles: They appear to have required a profession of faith of all *who applied* to them for baptism; at least what was equivalent to a profession. No difference was made between Jews and Gentiles. The cases of the Eunuch, of Cornelius, of Lydia, and of the Jailor are all in point. To this it may be added, that as far as the language of our Saviour goes on the subject, He supports the doctrine, that none who are capable of believing, ought to be baptised without a profession of faith: "He that believes and is baptised shall be saved."

But farther, the proposition is supported by the view which has been given of the nature of baptism. It is the initiatory ordinance of the church; and pledges the recipient to submission to that course of instruction which the head of the church has appointed. Now faith regards Jesus Christ as the great prophet of God, and is a necessary element in that docility and humbleness of mind required of a scholar in the school of Christ: Man, however, cannot judge the heart. A credible profession then, that is a profession not contradicted by any thing in the general tenor

of the conduct, is all that a minister of the gospel or a church can require.

As this doctrine is not a matter of dispute or doubt, it is unnecessary to employ farther time in its support. It is well, however, to caution those, who undertake to determine whether a candidate for baptism ought to be received, not to be too peremptory in their decisions. Great injury may be done to ignorant and inconsiderate persons, by the supposition, that the vote of a church or a church-session, or the declaration of a minister of the gospel, authoratively decides that they are believers. It may induce a security and self-confidence, fatal to the best interests of the soul.

The next proposition contained in the quotation, from the Assembly's Catechism, may be thus briefly expressed—*The child of a believing parent ought to be baptised.* The reader is requested to consider the following view of the subject; to compare the whole with the scriptures; and with humble prayer to Almighty God for direction, to judge for himself. As the subject, however, is disputed between sincere christians, let no one be precipitate and dogmatical.—This caution is given, while it is known, that incomparably the majority of christians embraces the doctrine vindicated in the following pages. The caution proceeds from no doubt resting on the writer's mind; but from a love of moderation and humility, and a dislike of their contraries.

Before proceeding directly to the proof of the proposition, an observation or two will be offered on the analogy between the constitution of nature, and the doctrine of the Bible on this subject. When God established what is called the *Covenant of Works* with Adam, the condition of all his posterity was connected with his conduct. We know that he sinned, and that all died in him; (see Rom. v. 12-19.) And there is every reason to believe, that had Adam obeyed, all would have lived through him. Now, although

this covenant has been abolished, yet there is a most intimate connection between the natural, civil and moral condition of parents and children. This remark might be illustrated by innumerable instances. *Ordinarily*, the children of weak, sickly parents, are themselves weak and sickly; those of ignorant parents grow up in ignorance. — The children of the poor, are poor; of the profligate, are abandoned; of the degraded, are despised; of the honourable, are respected; and so on almost without end. There is wisdom and benevolence in this appointment. It is intended to make use of the parental affection—perhaps the strongest and most inextinguishable affection of the human heart, in support of virtue and piety. This connection is apparent in the affairs of religion. *Ordinarily*, the children of heathens, are heathens; of Mahometans, are Mahometans; of Jews, are Jews; and of christians, are christians. The word *christians* here is used in the general loose and comprehensive sense of the term. Yet, while the idea that religion is propagated by ordinary generations is rejected, it is maintained that there is a great and very perceptible difference between the moral condition of the children of *truly pious* parents, and of nominal professors, who want only just religion enough to carry them to heaven. Now, considering the analogy which subsists between nature and revelation, it is not at all to be wondered at, if the great Head of the Church, who is also the author of nature, has made use of the intimate connection, which subsists between parents and children, in subservience to his purposes of mercy; and has made the condition of parents, in relation to the Church of Christ, to bear on the condition of children. Why should it be thought more wonderful or unreasonable, that children should be partakers of superior advantages, or entitled to higher privileges, because their parents are members of the church of Christ, than that their civil or intellectual condition should be better, (as in fact it is) because they are descended of parents

distinguished in the state, or elevated by education? These, however, are hints thrown out for the consideration of the reader. It is to the bible that we look for information and authority on this much agitated question.

And here the original constitution of the Church of God demands attention. By the church of God we mean what is ordinarily called the *visible* church; namely, that association into which persons are admitted who are recognized as church members. The Westminster confession says that "it consists of all those throughout the world, that profess the true religion, together with their children." (Ch. xxv. §. 2.) Now such an association must have some mode by which members should be initiated, and some rules for their regulation and good government. This is too obvious to require illustration. And it may help in determining the question—When was the church organized?

In looking into the New Testament we find that the term Church, when first introduced is, used without explanation, in a way that shows it to have been quite familiar to the people of that time. Matt. xvi. 13. "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church," &c. xvii. 17. "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." It seems manifest from this phraseology that the word Church conveyed no new idea to the disciples of our Saviour. This appears too, from the words of Stephen, (Acts, vii. 38.) "This is he that was *in the church* in the wilderness." In fact, the Greek word rendered *church* (*ἐκκλησία*) corresponds with the Hebrew term—(קהל) rendered *congregation*, and occurring so frequently, that an enumeration of the passages would be tedious. And the English phrase, *Church of God* is a liberal rendering of the Greek *ἐκκλησία θεῶν*; which is, again, a literal translation of the Hebrew קהל יהוה.

In fact, a great part of the phraseology of the New Testament is derived from the *old*; and it is impossible to read many passages of the former intelligibly, without an intimate acquaintance with the latter. The complex idea conveyed by the word church, cannot be adequately understood without reference to the old scriptures. This will appear strange to those who have taken up the opinion that the church was organized by our Saviour when on earth. That this is not true, follows from what has been said.—But the apostle Paul decides the point, when, speaking of the casting off of the Jews, and the admission of the Gentiles into the church of God, he says, Rom. xi. 17: “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.” The wild olive here represents the gentiles; the native branches, the Jews. Of these “some were broken off;” and “among them” the wild olive was “grafted.” Were not the gentiles brought into the church by this engrafting? If so, what was the condition of the “natural branches” among which they were grafted—Were they not also in the church of God? But as few deny that God had a church before the incarnation of Christ, this subject will not be insisted on.—The question then recurs, when was the visible church—that is a church admitting members by external rites, and adopting some principles common to every association that is to be held together—when was this church organized? It was not by John the baptiser. He pretended to no such authority; and in truth, was a Jew, conforming, during the course of his ministry to the Jewish ritual, and embodying no distinct society.—It is not imagined that any of the prophets organized the church of God. In a word, we first find the institution in the days of Abraham. God entered into covenant with him; constituted him the father of the faithful; and he received “*circumcision, as a seal of THE RIGHTEOUS-*

NESS OF FAITH." From the beginning, there was only one way of salvation—that is through the Lord Jesus Christ. But there was no *visible church* until God had appointed a visible sign and seal of that righteousness by which he would pronounce a sinner just; and glorify himself in his salvation. It was then, that God engaged to be a God to Abraham and his seed; and appointed him a father of many nations.—But on this subject the following quotation from the *Christian's Magazine* is offered to the consideration of the reader.

“By the covenant made with Abraham he acquired the prerogative of being the “*father of many nations.*” This article is, of itself, a demonstration that the covenant was of a much wider extent than all the literal descendants of Abraham in the line of Jacob put together. They never did make but *one* nation. There is a marked distinction between them and these “many nations;” who are evidently the same with “all the families of the earth,” that were to be blessed in Abraham. The apostle Paul interprets the phrase by another; his being “the *heir of the world;*” and peremptorily denies its restriction to the literal seed. *Rom. iv. 13, 16, 17.*

“The argument is short. Abraham’s seed comprehends all those of whom he is the father: but he is the father of many nations; therefore, these many nations are to be accounted as his seed. Again: the covenant was made with Abraham and with his seed: therefore, the covenant embraces these many nations who are included in his seed. This covenant was affirmed in an extraordinary manner; *viz.* by the rite of *circumcision: this saith God, is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee, every man child among you shall be circumcised.* The uses of this rite were two.

“*First.* It certified to the seed of Abraham, by a token in the flesh of their males, that the covenant with their great progenitor was in force; that they were under its

full operation; and entitled to all the benefits immediately derived from it. But circumcision had a further use; for,

Secondly, The apostle Paul informs us that it was a seal of the **RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE FAITH** which Abraham had being yet uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that **RIGHTEOUSNESS MIGHT BE IMPUTED** unto them also. *Rom. iv. 11.* In this connexion it certified,

“That Abraham was justified by faith:

“That the doctrine and the privilege of the “righteousness by faith,” were to be perpetuated among his seed by the operation of God’s covenant with him:

“That the justification of a sinner is by faith alone: “rightousness” being “imputed” to “all them that believe,” and to them only; who by the very fact of their believing, become, in the highest sense, children of Abraham, and are accordingly blessed with him.

“While, therefore, the sign of circumcision was in every circumcised person, a seal of God’s covenant with Abraham and with his seed, it was to all who walked in the faith of Abraham a seal of their personal interest in that same righteousness by which Abraham was justified.

“From these general premises the conclusion is direct and irrefragable, that the covenant with Abraham was designed to assure the accomplishment of the second great promise made to him while he was yet in Ur of the Chaldees; and that the effect of it was to bring him and his family, with all who should join them in a kindred profession, *into a church estate*, i. e. was a *covenant ecclesiastical*, by which Jehovah organized the visible church, as one distinct spiritual society; and according to which all his after dealings with her were to be regulated. Hitherto she had been scattered, and existed in detached parts. Now it was the gracious intention of God to reduce her into a compact form, that she might be prepared for the good things to come. Since Abraham was designated as the man from

whom the MESSIAH was to spring; since he had signally glorified the Lord's veracity, not staggering at his promise through unbelief, he selected this his servant as the favoured man in whose family he would commence the organization of that church in which he designed to perpetuate the righteousness of faith. With this church, as with the *whole*, composed, in the first instance, of Abraham's family, and to be increased afterwards by the addition of all such as should own his faith, was the covenant made. This is that covenant after which we are enquiring.

•• This covenant has never been annulled. The proof of the affirmative lies upon the affirmer. When? Where? and by whom was the act for annulling it promulgated? The "vanishing away" of the ceremonial law has nothing to do with the Abrahamic covenant, but to illustrate, confirm, and diffuse its blessings. The former was a temporary constitution, superadded for the purpose of giving effect to some provisions of the latter, and expired by its own limitation. The apostle Paul refutes the notion that the introduction of the ceremonial law, could at all prejudice the pre-existing covenant with Abraham; *Gal. iii. 15-17*. And if not its commencement, why its termination? And if the abolishing of the ceremonial law does not infer the cessation of the Abrahamic covenant, there is not a shadow of either proof or presumption that it has ceased. If there is, let it be produced. But not to rest the matter here, we may observe,

•• 1st. That the promise of Abraham's being a father of many nations, who are, therefore, his seed, never was, nor could be fulfilled, before the Christian dispensation. The apostle Paul was certainly of this mind; for he proves the calling of the Gentiles from Abraham's covenant; and if the calling of the Gentiles to be fellow-heirs in the church of God with the literal descendants of the patriarch, was grounded upon this covenant, this, again, shows that they

belong to that seed with whom it was made; and, consequently, it is in full force and virtue to this hour. The apostle presses this point with great ardour; and places it before us in various lights. *If ye be Christ's*, says he “*then are ye Abraham's seed; and heirs according to the promise.*” What promise? Not simply the promise of eternal life in Christ. There was no *necessity* of their being Abraham's seed to inherit this promise—but manifestly, the promise of Abraham's covenant to which they were entitled in virtue of their being his seed: i. e. the promise *I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee*. If, then, they who are Christ's are Abraham's seed; and being so are heirs according to the promise; the covenant, containing the promise, is in full virtue, as they belong to the seed with which it was made.

“2d. If the Abrahamic covenant is no longer in force, the church of God, as a visible public society, is not in any sense, connected with him by covenant-relation. This may weigh light with those who discard the doctrine of a visible Catholic church; but it draws much deeper than they suspect. The whole administration of the covenant of grace proceeds upon the principle that there *is* such a church. All the ordinances are given to it; all the promises are made to it. To the elect, as such, they are not, cannot be given. The application of them would be impossible without a special revelation: and the whole administration of the covenant of grace, by visible means would be at an end. Nor is a single instance to be found, excepting in virtue of immediate revelation, in which the Lord ever gave an ordinance or a promise to particular churches.—They always receive their privileges in virtue of their being parts of the church universal. Now this church universal which is the body of Christ, the temple of his Spirit, the depositary of his grace, stands in no covenant relation to God, in her public character, if the covenant with Abraham is annulled. For if she does, then another

covenant has been made with her. But no such covenant has been made. The new covenant which the Lord promised to make with her at the introduction of the evangelical dispensation, was to supercede, not the Abrahamic, but the Sinai covenant. It is so far from setting aside, that it implies, and establishes the former; for it is promised to her as that church which was organized and perpetuated under Abraham's covenant. If, therefore, that covenant is removed, and no other has replaced it, the church, in her social capacity, is further off from God than she was under the law; and all the mercies to which, in that capacity, she once had a claim, are swept away. But this is impossible. In fact, the scriptures uniformly suppose the existence of such public federal relations: and abound with promises growing out of them. Thus speaks the prophet—"The redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever."—*Is.* lix. 21, 22.

"This is a prediction of New Testament times: so the apostle applies it, *Rom.* xi. 26. And he applies it to the recovery of the Jews, which has not yet happened. The covenant, therefore, is in force, and it operates through the medium of Gentile Converts; the Lord's Spirit has long ago departed out of the mouth of the Jews. But the promise was made to the church, in her *covenanted character*; her members in constant succession are the "seed" out of whose mouth the divine Spirit shall not depart; and when the Jews are restored, they will be brought into this very covenanted church, and be again recognized as a part of the "seed." But why multiply words? There is no explaining of the frequent recurrence of the inspired writers

to the covenant of Abraham, nor any propriety in their reasoning, if it is not of perpetual operation.

“ 3d. In discussing the great question concerning the rejection of the Jews, the vocation of the Gentiles, and the future restoration of the former, the apostle reasons upon principles which are most false and impertinent, if the Abrahamic covenant has ceased. *Rom. xi. 17-24.*

“ He tells the Gentiles that, they were “ a wild olive tree;” and that the Jews were the “ good olive tree”—This cannot refer to their natural state as sinners before God; for in this respect there was no “ difference”—nor to their state as sinners saved by grace: for from this state there is no excision; it can refer to nothing but their visible *church estate*; i. e. to their public relation to God as a covenanted society. What, then, was this “ good olive tree,” from which the Jewish branches were “ broken off;” while the Gentiles were “ grafted in?” Evidently, the visible church organized under the covenant made with Abraham. There was no other from which the Jews could be cast off. The ceremonial law was superceded. It was no excision at all to be cut off from a constitution which did not exist; nor could the Gentiles be introduced into it. But what says the apostle? That the “ olive tree” was cut down or rooted up? That it had withered trunk and branch? Or was no longer the care of the divine planter? Nothing like it! He asserts the continuance of the olive tree in life and vigour; the excision of some worthless branches; and the insertion of new ones in their stead. “ Thou,” says he, addressing the Gentile, “ partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree. “ Translate this into less figurative language, and what is the import? That the church of God, his visible church, taken into peculiar relations to himself by the Abrahamic covenant, subsists without injury through the change of dispensation and members. Branches indeed may be cut off, but the rooted trunk stands firm, and other branches occupy the places of those which are lopped

away. The Jews are cast out of the church, but the church perished not with them. There was still left the trunk of the olive tree; there was still fatness in its roots: it stands in the same fertile soil, the covenant of God: and the admission of the Gentiles into the room of the excommunicated Jews, makes them a part of that covenanted church; as branches grafted into the olive tree and flourishing in its fatness, are identified with the tree. It is impossible for ideas conceived by the mind of man, or uttered in his language, to assert more peremptorily the continuance of the church under that very covenant which was established with Abraham and his seed. And this doctrine, understood before the apostleship of Paul, was maintained by John the Baptist; "*Think not,*" cried he to the multitudes who crowded around him, "*think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for verily I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*" The hearers of the baptist, like many modern professors of christianity, supposed that the duration of the covenant with Abraham, and of the prerogative of the Jews as God's peculiar people, were the same. It is a mistake, replies the second Elijah; you may all be cast off; you may all perish; but the oath to Abraham shall not be violated. God will be at no loss to provide "seed" who shall be as much within his covenant as yourselves, even though he should create them out of the stones of the earth. The threat was vain: it was empty noise; it was turning the thunders of God into a scarecrow for children, if the covenant with Abraham was not to survive the law of peculiarity, and be replenished with other seed than that which sprung from his loins according to the flesh."—[Vol. I. pp. 146-153.]

Having shown that the church of God was organized in the days of Abraham, we next state the fact that children were recognized as members of that church. This fact will not, and indeed cannot be disputed. The whole tenor of the history, from the time when the circumcision of Isaac

was recorded to the coming of our Saviour, shows that this was the case. During this long period infants were admitted into the church by the rite of circumcision.

“That this rite had a *spiritual signification* may appear, if any doubt is yet entertained on the subject, from the following passages of scripture.” Deut. x. 16. “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.” Deut. xxx. 6. “And the Lord God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” Jer. iv. 4. “Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.” It may also be remarked, that the term *uncircumcised* is frequently used in scripture to express the opposite of this circumcision of the heart—As in Leviticus, xxvi. 41, 42. “If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember.”

“In similar language, Jeremiah says, “Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken.” vi. 10. Again, ix. 26. He says, “And all the house of Israel, are uncircumcised in heart.” The same expressions are found in Ezekiel xlv. 7, 9.

“With these passages of scripture let us compare some in the New Testament. Rom. ii. 28, 29, “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God. iii. 1, 2. “What advantage then has the Jew? And

what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. 30th ver, "Seeing that it is one God who shall justify the *circumcision by faith*, and the *uncircumcision thro' faith*." Rom. iv. 11-12. "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had being yet uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed to them also: and the father of circumcision, to them who are not only of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised." Phil. iii. 10. "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Col. ii. 11. "In whom ye also are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." It may also be remarked that, in the New Testament, the term uncircumcised is used in the same sense as in the Old; as in Acts ii. 51. "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears; ye do always resist the Holy Ghost—as your fathers did, so do ye." With this, and the passages quoted above, may be compared James I. 21. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and *superfluity of naughtiness*, and with meekness receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls." In this text, the phrase *superfluity of naughtiness*, may sound strangely. Is any naughtiness to be retained; that the superfluity of it is to be laid aside? The expression has reference to the rite of circumcision, and to the spiritual import thereof; and can only be explained in this way. To a person understanding the manner in which this ceremony was performed; the corruption of nature, expressed by it; and the sanctification designated; the passage will appear clear.

“The rite under consideration seems to have been instituted for the purpose of showing that a corrupt nature is propagated by man; and that this corruption must be removed, or the sinner be made to suffer the penalty of the broken law. As it was a painful and bloody rite, it aptly represented the desert of sin, and the bloody sacrifice which was necessary for the pardon of the sinner. The sinful nature represented by circumcision is, in the New Testament, called the old man; and in the epistle to the Eph. iv. 22-24, the apostle very plainly expresses the truth here exhibited by a type; “That ye put off concerning the former conversation *the old man*, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”—This the apostle represents as the amount of the christian doctrine. But this is the very thing represented by circumcision; as will appear manifest by adverting to the passages in Deuteronomy already quoted. x. 16. “Circumcise the foreskin of your heart; and xxx. 6. “The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” The most obvious and important effect of regeneration is, to induce the supreme love of God; this circumcision of the heart, then, to love God in this way, is undoubtedly regeneration. But if circumcision is not intended to express this doctrine, it would be utterly improper to use such language as that of Moses. If farther evidence is necessary, the declaration of the apostle in Rom. ii. 28-29, already quoted, will be amply sufficient. “He is not a Jew who is one outwardly,” &c. Circumcision then implies the corruption of our nature, the punishment to which, in consequence of sin, we are exposed; and the necessity of the regenerating and sanctifying grace of God. So that a man truly circumcised in the full scriptural sense of the term is a true member of the church of God.

he worships God in the spirit, rejoices in Christ Jesus, and puts no confidence in the flesh.

“Again, we observe that circumcision is a seal of the righteousness of faith. This is evident from the express declaration of the apostle Paul, Rom. iv. 11. “He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had, being yet in uncircumcision, &c. The righteousness of faith is that righteousness, by which a sinner is justified in the sight of God. This is sometimes called “the law of righteousness”—Rom. ix. 31. It is elsewhere called “the righteousness of God”—Rom. i. 17, and x. 3. And in Phil. iii. 9, it is described as, “the righteousness which is of God by faith.” This is a righteousness pointed out by God, wrought, and freely conferred by him as the God of all grace. It is received by the sinner, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. At the time when circumcision was instituted, an epitome of the gospel was given to Abraham; by the grace of God he had been enabled to believe; and God to encourage and strengthen his faith, added circumcision as a pledge of his own faithfulness in the performance of his promises; and as a sign and seal of that righteousness of faith, of which Abraham had been made partaker, and through which it was the divine intention to justify every one who should be saved. Thus was the gospel, the very identical gospel in which we believe, preached to Abraham. And thus did God give evidence, for the comfort of the church, that the Messiah, who according to carnal descent was then in the loins of Abraham, in the fulness of time should come, and be cut off for the sins of the people. The ancient Jewish Doctors understood this spiritual design of circumcision, as appears from their customary saying, “A proselyte from the time that he becomes a proselyte, is like a new born infant.” And hence, when Nicodemus wondered at the doctrine of our Lord concerning regeneration, our Saviour asked, “Art thou a Teacher in Israel, and knowest not these things?”

“ Farther, it will appear that circumcision was a seal of the covenant of grace, by adverting to the text before quoted. It was a seal of the righteousness of faith, says the apostle. And the righteousness of faith, is the righteousness which God bestows according to the covenant of grace and which entitles us to its blessings—But circumcision was the seal of the covenant which God in Christ made with Abraham, therefore the Abrahamic covenant was the covenant of grace.

“ Farther, according to the preceding account, circumcision implied, and required the exercise of faith. Of this there can be no reasonable doubt, since it was the seal of the righteousness of faith. To deny this would be to affirm that circumcision was the seal of that which was not true. Accordingly, when a Jewish parent offered a child for circumcision, that parent did of course make a profession of faith in the covenant promises of God; and when a proselyte applied for this rite, it would have been perfectly correct to address him in the identical words which Philip addressed to the Eunuch, “ If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.”

“ Another remark of importance is, that circumcision was the initiatory ordinance into the visible church of God under the former dispensation.

“ When God called Abraham and established the church in his family, circumcision was instituted. The child of every Hebrew was, according to divine command, to be circumcised. When any person became a proselyte, this rite was to be administered to him, and his offspring—so that in no case whatever, was an uncircumcised male considered a member of the congregation of the Lord, that is of the visible church. The result of the whole may be thus stated—God established a visible church in the family of Abraham: circumcision was,

“ 1. The initiatory ordinance into that church, and implied

“ 2. Depravity of human nature, and liability to punishment.

“ 3. The necessity of pardon [through the blood of the Messiah] and of sanctification [through the Spirit.]

“ 4. It was a seal of the righteousness of faith; and of course

“ 5. Of the covenant of grace. And as such obliged the subjects of it to a life of holiness and new obedience: It therefore represented a death unto sin and a life unto holiness.” *Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine*, vol. I, pp. 151-155.

This subject has been urged at such length, and almost the *same* idea has been repeated, because it has a most important bearing on the great question under consideration.

It was, then, the appointment of God that the initiatory rite of the church should be applied to infants, from the organization of the church, until the coming of Christ. Our blessed Saviour, it is granted, made changes in the external form of the church, and particularly in the initiatory ordinance. But where is the evidence of a change in this particular? What law of our Saviour's kingdom excludes from it those who had been previously admitted? An express precept cannot be pointed to by those who most vehemently contend for positive commands on this subject. And all the inferential reasoning that has ever been brought forward, as far as it proves any thing, proves that infants ought no more to have been admitted in former times than under the present dispensation. Is it said that faith is necessary to baptism?—Surely it was as necessary in the case of circumcision, which was a seal of the righteousness of faith. Is it said that baptism implied regeneration; and it is impossible to determine whether infants are regenerated or not? The same was the case with circumcision.—*The whole argument then comes into a short compass.* BY THE APPOINTMENT OF GOD, INFANTS WERE RECOGNIZED AS MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH: BUT THIS APPOINTMENT

HAS NEVER BEEN ABROGATED; THEREFORE THEY ARE STILL TO BE RECEIVED.

But let us, in the next place, examine some passages in the New Testament, which directly bear on the subject of Christian Baptism.

And here, we begin with the institution of this ordinance. This is recorded in Matt. xxviii. 19-20. "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."—This was the institution of *christian baptism*. It is true that a rite thus designated, was used before this time. But it could not have been the initiatory ordinance of the christian church; because the church in its christian form had not been organized. Our blessed Lord, regarded as to his human nature, lived and died a Jew, conforming to all the appointments of the Mosaical ritual; and the Jewish economy was not abolished until Jesus Christ, having accomplished his work by rising from the dead, appeared as the head of his church, and ordained new laws for its government and discipline. The baptism applied to Jewish proselytes, could not have been the initiatory ordinance into the church of God; for circumcision was used for that purpose.—John's baptism could not have borne that character. 1. Because John was a Jewish believer, and pretended to no authority to make new ordinances in the church. 2. Because his baptism made no recognition of the Holy Spirit. (See Acts. xix. 2-3.) 3. Because the church in its christian form had no existence in the days of John.—The baptism administered by our Saviour and his disciples, *previous to his resurrection*, was not the *christian baptism* as afterwards instituted by Christ. 1. Because it required, as far as we can judge, only a profession of belief, that Christ was the Messiah. 2. Because, of course, it made, as in the case of John's baptism, no acknowledgement of the Holy Ghost. 3. It made no abolition of the

temple service, or any part of the Jewish ritual. Until our Saviour gave the Apostles their commission, the form of the church was unchanged. It was *then*, that application of water, by an authorized ministry, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, introduced persons into the school of Christ, that there they might be taught to observe all things that he had commanded.

“Go, says our Lord, *make all nations disciples, baptising them.* How are we to understand this command? How did they understand it to whom it was addressed? In order to make this discovery, we should not only study the import of the words themselves, but also the education, the opinions and even the prejudices of the apostles; for prejudices they certainly had at that time, and strong ones too. In a word, we should labour to place ourselves, as it were, in their very position, surrounded with all the circumstances in which they stood when they received this injunction. In proportion as we succeed in this attempt, we shall be likely to ascertain how they understood the commission of their Lord; and their understanding of it will exhibit its infallible meaning, unless subsequent evidence shall arise to prove that they were mistaken. I lay this down as a general rule for the explication of all those parts of ancient records which consist of addresses from one person to another.—If the reader have any doubt of its correctness, I invite him to pause and examine it carefully before he proceed farther. Such an examination, I am confident, will convince him that the rule is a just one, and of great importance in the interpretation of the scriptures.

“The apostles, then, could not be ignorant that in all the important affairs of life it was common for parents to act and engage in behalf of their children; heads of families in behalf of their households. They knew that it was common for children to be comprehended with their parents, in those covenants which God had at various times made with men. But farther; they were Jews, members of the Jewish church.

the admission of families into which church was a fundamental principle and an invariable practice. From the founding of that church in the house of Abraham, the children and servants of Hebrew believers were uniformly received and included within it. And whereas a law had been given, for the admission into that church of proselytes from other nations, they knew that by the law the households of professing proselytes were admitted with them, and were equally subjects of the initiating ordinance. Nor had they, so far as we can discover, ever heard from their master any intimation that he intended any change in this matter.

“I have farther to observe that it is a fact well-established by ancient testimony that it was an universal custom amongst the Jews to baptize, at the same time that they circumcised proselytes, both parents and children.* That this practice existed before the coming of our Lord appears certain; as, besides the testimonies which prove it, it is utterly incredible that the Jews should have assumed the rite in imitation of the Christians whom they raucorously hated and despised. This fact accounts in the best manner for the reception which John’s baptism met with from the Jews. It is remarkable that they express no surprise, nor ask any questions, about his baptizing with water as a religious rite. They only inquire for the authority of his commission.† This is inconsistent with baptism’s being a novelty among them as a sign of entering into a new religious relation; and concurs with the other evidence to prove that it was a constant practice.

“It may be objected that this Jewish baptism, not being founded or at least clearly ascertained by their law, should

* “No one is a proselyte until he be circumcised and baptised” This was a standing rule amongst the Jews. “If, says Maimonides, an Israelite find a heathen infant, and baptise him in the name of a proselyte, behold, he is a proselyte.”

† John. i. 25. *And they asked him, and said unto him, why baptisest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias neither that prophet?*

not be supposed to have any influence on the minds of the Apostles in the understanding of their commission. But this conclusion I cannot admit. It was a matter of fact with which they must have been well acquainted; and we do not find that our Lord ever condemned it. It would, therefore, have its influence on the minds of the Apostles. It is not true, that every Jewish institution of which we do not find the divine authority in their law, was implicitly condemned by our Lord. When and by what authority were the Jewish synagogues instituted? On this subject the Old Testament is altogether silent. Yet our Lord gave them his unequivocal approbation, by constantly officiating in them. Nay, the government and modes of worship of the christian church were in a great measure conformed to the model of the synagogue.

“ Another remark, of no little weight, presents itself here. It was a custom amongst the Jews to conclude the celebration of the passover by eating bread and drinking wine. Of this we need no other evidence than the account given of the last passover celebrated by our Lord with his Apostles.* Now this very Jewish custom our Lord solemnly appointed to be a standing ordinance in his church. When, therefore, the command was given to make disciples and baptize, would not the Apostles naturally understand it as an adoption of the Jewish baptism? Are not the two cases strongly analogous?

Considering then the circumstances of the Apostles, and the views of things which they must have had, let us suppose them to have been divinely commissioned to go forth to all the nations, and make them disciples to Moses, initiating them into that state by circumcision. Would they not have thought themselves bound to receive and circumcise the children with their parents, the household with their

* Luke xxii. 19, 20. *And he took bread, and gave thanks, &c. Likewise also the cup after supper, &c.*

believing heads? I think it perfectly evident that they would. Now only substitute the name of Christ for that of Moses, and baptism for circumcision, and it becomes the very commission contained in the text. Considering this, together with what we have seen concerning Jewish baptism, must we not conclude that the commission contemplated the baptism of the household of believers as well as of themselves, and that the Apostles so understood it?

“Should it be objected, that so far as any conclusion can be formed from circumcision to baptism, it would only warrant the baptism of males, as none but males were circumcised: I answer that the efficacy of circumcision was considered as extending to females also;* that females are as capable of being baptised as males; that they are disciples, and all disciples are by the text commanded to be baptised; and finally, that care has been taken to inform us expressly that baptism belongs equally to both sexes.†

“Supposing the Apostles to have understood their commission rightly, there still remains to be answered an objection against our conclusion. This is founded on the meaning of the word disciple. It has often been asserted by our brethren, and that with much confidence, that little children being incapable of being taught, cannot be made disciples; nay, that discipleship necessarily implies not only a capacity of instruction, but actual previous instruction. But is this assertion true? I acknowledge that the term disciple has a relation to instruction. But it by no means implies universally, that he who is called a disciple must have been previously instructed. A disciple is one who puts himself or who is put by others under the authority of

* Exod. xii. 4. *And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it, and according to the number of the souls, &c.* Compared with v. 43.—*for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.*

† Acts viii. 12.—*They were baptised, both men and women.*

a teacher. The word applies equally to both cases. We agree that of adults no longer under the controul of parents, no person can be called a disciple of Christ without a profession of faith in him as the Messiah, and of subjection to his authority. But what has this to do with the reception of children as his disciples? How does it oppose their admission into his school, that they may be taught in future? Is it fair reasoning, that because adults are not to be received without a profession of voluntary subjection to Christ, therefore, children, incapable of making such profession, are to be excluded? I think not. But I go farther, and observe that there is a text in the New Testament where little children are manifestly called disciples. There was a set of men in the days of the Apostles, who went about persuading the christian converts, that they must needs be circumcised and keep the law. It is evident that they wished to burden them with the whole law of Moses; and insisted particularly on circumcision as the ground work, and that which could give a binding force to the rest. Now this matter being proposed to the Apostles and brethren, it was asserted by Peter, and afterwards determined by them all, that it was not necessary to *impose this yoke upon the neck of the disciples.** Had the false teachers gained their object, it is certain that the heavy yoke of circumcision would have fallen principally on the infantile age. So it had been in the Jewish church; and so it would have been in the christian church. Little children, therefore, are here called disciples. We may remark moreover, that this text affords an obvious and strong proof of our main point, that the children of professing believers were received with them into the church.

“Should any hesitate about infant discipleship, I will propose to their consideration this question; is there any thing more strange in the denominating of little children

* Acts xv. 10.

disciples, than in their entering and being taken into covenant with God, of whatever nature the covenant may be? Yet this latter cannot be denied to have taken place. Besides the great covenant made with Abraham,* Moses has left on record a most striking instance of it which took place under his administration.† On the whole, therefore, I conclude that the Apostles must have understood their commission to enjoin the reception as disciples, and consequently the baptism, of the household of the believer, as well as of the believer himself.” *Virginia Religious Magazine, Vol. III. pp. 35-40.*

This view of the commission given to the apostles prepares the way for a consideration of the practice pursued by them in reference to the subject of baptism. This practice we state to have been thus:—When an unbaptised adult presented himself as a candidate for baptism, *he was required to make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ; and on this profession he was baptised: and if he had children, they were baptised also.* The former part of the proposition is not disputed; the latter is established by the following scripture facts.

There is a passage in Peter’s speech, recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which many truly pious and learned men have thought of great weight on this question. We only cite the passage and pass on. Acts ii. 39. “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.” An argument of much strength might be derived from this text, in favour of the application of

* On this point the reader is requested to read Gen. xvii. carefully throughout.

† Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12. *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, your wives, and the stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water; that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into the oath which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.*

baptism to children—but the discussion must not be prolonged.

Let us proceed, then, to the case of Lydia, recorded in the Acts, xvi. 14, 15. That this case may be understood, it ought to be known that Thyatira, the birth place of Lydia, was a small city in the province of *Lydia* in Asia Minor, and was settled by a colony of Macedonians. The women of this place were celebrated for their skill in the art of dyeing purple, so famous in ancient times. Garments of purple cloth were worn by the great men and nobles of former days. The poor were neither able to purchase them, nor were they allowed to wear them. Now Lydia was a seller of purple. The city of Thyatira, in a remote colony, did not suit her trade; she therefore removed from it to Philippi, the metropolis of Macedonia, and there established herself. From the nature and quality of the goods in which she trafficked, a very considerable *capital* was necessary to carry it on. There is not the least probability that Lydia was a *Pedlar*, strolling from town to town, selling her wares as she could. In that period of time, and that part of the world, it is utterly unlikely that a *woman* would travel about with an article of commerce, more precious than gold, as petty traffickers do with their *notions* at present. Much less is it likely that she would pass over the sea from Asia to Europe in the way of *peddling*. The brief account given by the sacred historian, warrants the belief that Lydia was *settled* in Philippi in the way of her trade. His words are these—“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things that were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptised and her household, she besought us saying, if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.” The words recited sufficiently show that Lydia was baptised on a profession of

faith: it is equally true that her *household* were baptised. And to me it seems clear, that it was on *the profession of her faith* that this application of baptism was made. The historian speaks of Lydia's heart being opened; and immediately subjoins, that she and her household were baptised. And when Lydia invited the apostles to abide with her, she says, "if ye have judged ME to be faithful." Now, had the family of Lydia consisted of adult believers, would she not most naturally have said, in assigning a reason why the apostles should accept her invitation, "if ye have judged US to be faithful?" Lydia was a woman of business, and would frequently have her attention occupied by the affairs of her merchandise. Had other believers belonged to her household, she would scarcely have failed to allude to them in the invitation. But she did not.—In a word, her language is precisely that of a mother, who, according to pedobaptist principles, had devoted herself, and her household to the Lord. But let us enquire what is the proper signification of the word translated, *household*.

The original is OIKOS. This, every scholar knows, is primarily a house; but by a very common figure of speech, it is frequently put for that which a house contains, *that is a family*. It ought to be observed here, that the word family is used, in distinction from the head of that family. Thus a father or a mother says, *I, and my family*—*My family is at home—is from home, &c.* The case is the same in Greek; and universally the word OIKOS in the metaphorical sense just noticed, signifies the descendants of one who is named as head of the house. Thus Matt. x. 6. "But go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house (*οἴκῳ*) of Israel." Here it means the descendants of Jacob, otherwise called Israel. See also Matt. xv. 24. Luke i. 27.—"A man whose name was Joseph, of the *house of David*," that is, doubtless, a descendant of David. Same chapter, verse 33. "And he shall reign over the *house of Jacob*

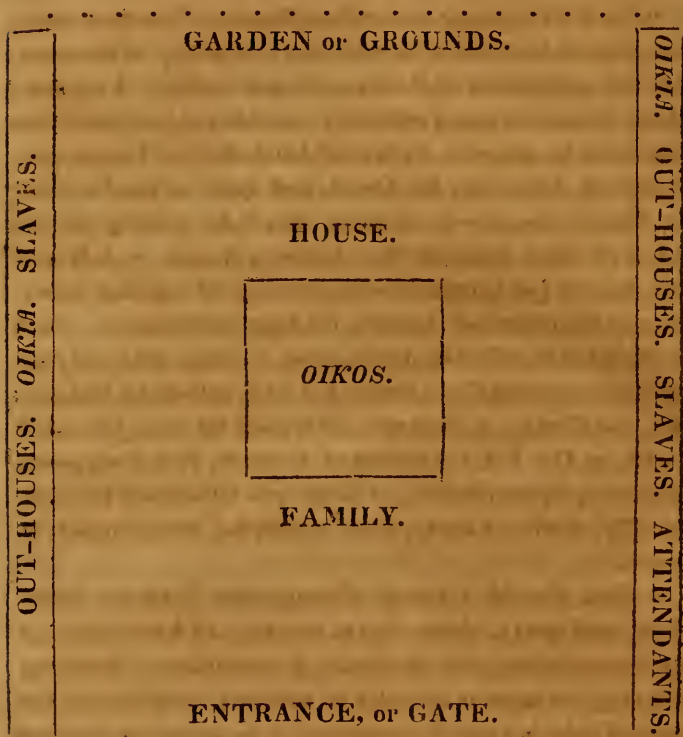
forever. Ver. 69. And hath raised a horn of salvation to us, in the *house* of David." See also Luke ii. 4. x. 5. xi. 17. In one of the passages last referred to, x. 5, a distinction is made between (*οἰκίαν*) the residence of the family and (*οἶκος*) the house or family, "And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this *house*." Acts ii. 36, "Therefore let the whole *house* of Israel assuredly know," &c. Acts x. 2, "A devout man, that feared God with all his *house*," &c. Here Cornelius is distinguished from his (*οἶκος*) family. Acts xi. 14, "Who shall speak words unto thee, by which *thou* shalt be saved, and all thy *house*." See also xvi. 31, xviii. 8, 1. Cor. i. 16.—"I baptised also the *house* (*οἶκον*) of Stephanas." References on this subject might be extended much farther; but these are all sufficient.

This use of the term *house* in the sense of *family*, as before remarked, is metaphorical; and is derived from the term *house* in the sense of building; that is a fixed, permanent and lasting residence:

[*Extracts from a pamphlet, entitled, Facts and Evidences on the subject of Baptism, &c. In Three Letters, &c. By the Editor of Calmet's Dictionary, &c.*]

"Now, as we are able at all times to recur to the *proper* use of this term, we are equally able to correct any mistake that may occur in the metaphorical use of it: and since we find the term used metaphorically in several languages, we may be sure, that there is such a correspondence and similarity between the original object, and the significative application of the term, that with a little prudence and patience our enquiries into its real meaning, cannot fail of satisfactory success. Give me leave, therefore, to set before you the plan of a *house*, as such buildings are commonly constructed in Greece; and as we have every reason to believe, they were commonly constructed, in ancient ages.

Certainly, I do not mean to infer, that every house corresponds to this plan: but I submit it, as enabling you to form a general, an ordinary, or leading conception, of such an establishment, sufficient for every useful purpose when you wish to bring a proposed idea to the test of matter of fact.



“ The first remark on this figure is, the separation of the out-houses from the principal dwelling. It is evident that, correctly speaking, the *house* cannot be said to include the grounds and out-houses: the *house* might be *built up*, or *pulled down*, enlarged, or diminished, without affecting the out-houses, in the least. But, the out-houses may be said, without any force on language, to include the house:—and

certainly, the whole may be expressed by one comprehensive term, establishment—premises—residence—place—buildings, &c. We have only to suppose that the house is built of stones; or permanent materials in combination; (not so the out-houses) to complete the conception, sufficiently for our purpose.

“ Such is the *proper* and real application of the term *house*; our present business is to trace the conformity of the *metaphorical* application of the term, to this reality. I suppose, there cannot be equal authority on this subject, much less can there be superior, to that of Aristotle, the famous preceptor of Alexander the Great, and quite as good a critic in Greek as——no matter, who. In writing on the polity of cities, Aristotle thus defines a House. “ A HOUSE is a Society [or Companionship] connected together according to the course of nature, for long continuance. Such (a Society) is called by Charondas, “ *those who eat from the same cupboard,*” or pantry; but (it is called) by Epimenides, the Cretan, “ *those who sit around the same fire-side:*” —[Or, as Du Val, the Editor of Aristotle, rather supposes, correcting by conjecture, “ *those who sit around the same table.*”] Such a Society, says Aristotle, is an ΟΙΚΟΣ, or HOUSE.

“ But, the old Grecian distinguishes between ΟΙΚΟΣ *House*, and ΟΙΚΙΑ, *House-HOLD*, exactly as I have shewn in my former letter, that Scripture distinguishes. Speaking of a city, he says, “ In order to obtain a clear idea of the parts of which a city is composed, it is necessary that we should previously explain what an ΟΙΚΙΑ is. For every city is composed of connected ΟΙΚΙΑΣ: and further, an ΟΙΚΙΑ (is composed) of several parts; and these placed together in their sations, constitute the ΟΙΚΙΑ. But, a COMPLETE ΟΙΚΙΑ comprises the servants [slaves] and those who are free.” By “ *free*” Aristotle means, as appears from the tenor of his whole discourse, extending through several chapters, the Master and his family: one who is

capable of citizenship; one “among those are free by nature;—whereas, to such the slaves belong.” He afterwards expatiates on this definition: he speaks of the wife as being “free;” not, as among barbarians, a slave; of the children, as being “free,” &c. and he, says, There is but a slight difference between the skill required to govern a great OIKIA—*House-HOLD*, and that required to govern a small city.” On the whole, nothing can be clearer, than that the term *oikos*—*House*—EXCLUDES the *oikia*—*out-houses*, or *House-HOLD* but, the term *oikia* includes the *House*; exactly as it might be inferred from consideration of our plan; where the proper sense of the terms, with this natural distinction and distribution of them, is reduced to matter of fact, and appears to the conviction of the eye.

“Now, give me leave here, to beg your consideration, Sir, as to what Aristotle himself, had he met with the term *house* in reading the N. T. would have understood by it— or rather—what would any “plain unlettered (*Greek*) man having only the *Greek* N. T. in his hand,” have understood, when reading in his native language,—“We baptized Lydia, with her society connected together, according to the course of nature, for long continuance:” “We baptized the Jailor, with ALL those who eat from the same cupboard as himself.” “I baptized those who sit around the same fire side with my valued friend Stephanas:—or, if you prefer the corrected reading—“I baptize those who sit around the same table with my honoured friend.” I found my opinion on these and similar passages, when I say, a Greek reader *must* have understood this term—*house*—in a very extensive sense: including not only ALL the children in every stage of life, but—*something more*.

“But, the elegance of the last definition (though conjectural) “those who sit around the same table,” reminds me of the exquisite comparison of the Psalmist—“*Thy wife shall be like a fruitful vine, by the side of thy house; thy children like olive plants round about thy table.*”————

“And, this again reminds me, that, though writing in

Greek, the Apostles were Hebrews by descent; that they were perfectly familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, and with the Hebrew language, as spoken by their nation, and that, beyond a doubt, they used the term *HOUSE* in the same sense as it was used by the Old Testament writers. This will not be denied: and if it is not denied, we have only to consult Moses and the Prophets, and rest our enquiry on their answer, as the termination of our labours.

“ We have seen three Grecian Philosophers propose three different ideas (though all co-incident) on the *metaphorical* signification of the term *House*; we are not, then, to wonder, if we find among the Hebrews a fourth derivation, entirely distinct from either of the former, but equally ingenious, and much more plausible.

“ According to the Hebrews, the *metaphorical* derivation of the term *House*, was, from the circumstance of a dwelling-house being *built*—*BUILT-UP*—of stones, for instance. A *metaphorical* House, therefore,—a FAMILY—was a building of *living* stones. Ask yourself, then, Sir, which are the proper *living* stones to *build up* a family or *house*?—are they the seniors or juniors?—is the *infant*, born to-day, or the man of a hundred years old who dies to-morrow?—And here I will not compound with you, Sir; I will not allow you to say, “ the term *house*, as used in the O. T. implies the *ELDERS* of a family, *strictly* and *properly*; but the infants *accidentally* and *improperly*.”

“ No, Sir, I willingly hazard the utmost severity of censure, when I affirm on the contrary, that the *direct, strait forward, explicit, and unquestionable*, reference of the term *House* is to the *INFANTS*, *primarily* and *properly*; and to the seniors or even to the Parents, if at all, *accidentally, improperly, and occasionally* only. The proof of this may safely rest on the following passages:—and first, of the metaphor *BUILDING*.

“ 2 SAM. vii. 27. Thou, O Lord God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will *BUILD thee a*

HOUSE, i. e. will establish thy *family*. Comp. 1
CHRON. xvii. 25.

“ 2 SAM. vii. 11. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will
MAKE *thee* A HOUSE.

“ ————— 29. Now let it please thee to bless the *house*
of thy servant—and with thy blessing let the *house*
of thy servant be blessed forever.” i. e. his *fami-*
ly. Compare the same promise to Solomon; 1
Kings xi. 38.

“ EXOD. i. 21. “ And it came to pass, because the mid-
wives feared God, that he MADE THEM HOUSES,”
i. e. he gave them numerous *families*.

Gen. xxx. 1, 2. “ Before reading the following, con-
sult the history of Jacob and Rachel; “ Give me children,
or else I die,” says the disappointed wife:—her husband
replies, “ am I in God’s stead, who hath withheld from
thee *the fruit of the womb?*”

“ PSALM cxxvii. Except the Lord BUILD *the* HOUSE, they
labour in vain that build it.—

“ LO CHILDREN, are a heritage of the Lord,
and the *fruit of the womb* is his reward.”

“ The Hebrew, very remarkable here, fixes the sense to
issue: “ those who labour to *build the house*, IN IT.”

“ That this etymological derivation of the term *house*—
as importing a *metaphorical building*, CONTINUED, and was
ADOPTED *by the Apostles*, may be shown from various pas-
sages of N. T.

Eph. ii. 19, 21. “ Now, therefore, ye are no more stran-
gers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and
members of the house-hold establishment of God; and are
BUILT on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets,
Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom
all the BUILDING fitly framed together, groweth into a
holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are BUILDED
together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. "Coming to the Lord, as to a living [life-giving] stone,—ye also, as *living stones* are BUILT UP a *spiritual house* [*family*, as that of Aaron,] a holy priesthood, to offer up *spiritual sacrifices*," &c.

Tit. i. 11. "They subvert,—overturn,—turn *topsy-turvy*.—WHOLE HOUSES,"—families: the very reverse of building up: *un-building*.

"These passages are decisive.

"In proof that HOUSE imports CHILDREN—distinct from their parents.

* DEUT. xxxv. 9. Then shall his brother's wife . . . spit in his face and say, so shall it be done unto that man who will *not* BUILD UP *his* BROTHER'S HOUSE," by obtaining children—*infants*—from his widow.

* GEN. xvi. 2. And Sarai said unto Abraham, the Lord hath restrained me from child-bearing: I pray thee go in unto my maid; it may be that *I* may obtain (*infant*) children by her,"—"be BUILDED by her." Margin and Hebrew.

——— xxx. 3. Rachel said to Jacob, behold my maid Bilhah—she shall bear upon my knees, that *I* may also have (*infant*) children by her,"—be BUILDED by her." Margin and Hebrew.

* GEN. vii. And the Lord said to Noah, come thou AND all thy *house* into the ark.

"The parent is distinguished from his family.

* 1 KINGS xvii. 8, 16. The widow woman of Zarepta did according to the saying of Elijah;—and 1, she, 2, he, and 3, her HOUSE, did eat many days."—Her son must be her *house*, distinct from his mother; as there were but three persons, concerned in the history.

* GEN. xlvi. 26, 31. Jacob and all his seed came into Egypt, his sons, his sons sons, his daughters and his sons daughters—all his seed. *All the souls*

which came out of his loins—all the souls of the HOUSE of Jacob were three score and ten.”——
The phrase those which came out of the loins of Jacob, must exclude Jacob himself.

“ NUMB. xviii. 11. The heave offerings have I given to thee and thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, every one that is clean in thy HOUSE. The parent is, evidently, not comprised in the term *house*.

“ DEUT. xxvi. 11. Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given thee, and unto thine HOUSE.” The distinction is preserved here also.

“ 2 SAM. xiii. 11. I will raise up evil against thee, (David) out of thine own *house*.”—“ from among thy children. See story of Absalom, &c.

“ That this distinction between parents and children, CONTINUED, and was ADOPTED by the Apostles, is manifest, from the passages already adduced:—Lydia, and her *house*:—the Bishop, and his *house*:—the Deacon, and his *house*:—the *family* of Stephanas, separate from himself:—the *family* of Crispus, separate from himself:—the *family* of Onesiphorus, separate, &c.

“ In proof, that HOUSE means INFANTS, explicitly.

“ NUM. xvi. 27, 22. Dathan and Abiram came out and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their LITTLE CHILDREN.— And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their HOUSES.”—Their *little children* then, were their *houses*

“ JOB xx. 28. The *increase of his house* shall roll away; shall flow away as a torrent flows, in the day of his wrath.” That the term “ *increase of a house*,” means a *family*, See 1 Sam. ii. 3.

“ PSALM lxxviii. 6. God setteth the solitary (*man*) in *families*.” in a HOUSE, *i. e.* INFANTS. Mar. and Heb.

“ PSALM cxiii. 2. God maketh the barren woman to sit in her HOUSE—*family*; the joyful mother of children,” INFANTS.

“ ISAIAH xliii. 6. Their children shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes, their HOUSES shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished. The Medes shall not regard silver, nor delight in gold.—Their bows shall dash the young men to pieces: They shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb: their eye shall not spare children.”

“ It was not the dwelling houses which the Medes were to spoil, for they regarded not silver nor gold; which is the natural spoil of dwelling houses; but houses in the sense of families—the fruit of the womb, *i. e.* INFANTS.

“ HOUSE means INFANTS, before they are conceived—consequently, when they are *not present*.

“ GEN. xviii. 19. “ I know Abraham, that he will command his children [plural] even his HOUSE, after him.” Here Isaac is spoken of as *house* to Abraham, in the close of the day on which he was promised by the three Angels; consequently before his conception.

“ 2 SAM. vii. 11–16. “ The Lord telleth thee that he will MAKE thee a HOUSE and set up thy SEED after thee, which SHALL PROCEED out of thy bowels”—Consequently, this *infant*, David’s successor, was not yet begotten.

“ RUTH iv. 12. “ And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders said—The Lord make the woman that is come into thy (dwelling) house, like Rachel and like Leah, which two did BUILD UP the HOUSE of Israel:—And let THY HOUSE (family) be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, OF THE SEED WHICH THE LORD SHALL GIVE THEE OF THIS YOUNG WOMAN.

“ It is not possible by any words, or form of words; whatever, to express INFANTS more decidedly, than by these applications of the term HOUSE: and, in fact, if there were no other text in the Old Testament, this last, alone, is sufficient to establish the proposition that the term *house* in Old Testament language MUST mean an *infant*. The idea recurs repeatedly in the passage. 1. The *building up* the *house* of Israel is *infant-child-bearing*, undoubtedly; 2. Thy HOUSE—that is, the “ S EED which the Lord SHALL GIVE THEE of this young woman,” MUST mean an *infant*; and this is the national and acknowledged language, used by “ all the people that were in the gate;” and not by the vulgar only, but by those well instructed also; by the *elders*; and this took place before Boaz was married: for it follows—So Boaz took Ruth to wife.” The rest of the story we know.

“ Thus we see that an *infant* is expressed in Old Testament language, by the term *house*, both by father’s side and mother’s side, before it is begotten or conceived:—that the same usage of the word was CONTINUED and ADOPTED by the *Apostles*, is clear from the instance of the young women, in Timothy, concerning whom the Apostle says, as of an event yet future, he would have them “ marry—bear children—*despotize* their HOUSE.” or *family*; in exact conformity with the wishes of the Elders and the people, in behalf of Boaz and Ruth.

“ We need extend our enquiries no further:—let us reduce the result to conclusive evidence.

“ By what was Sarai and Rachel *buildded up*? By *Infants*.

“ What does the term *Houses* imply? LITTLE CHILDREN.

“ In what *house* does God set the solitary *man*?—In an *INFANT family*.

“ In what *house* does God set the barren *woman*? In an *INFANT family*.

• What is the *increase* of a *house*? INFANTS.

• What is a *house* in the sense of *fruit of the womb*? INFANTS.

• What was to be commanded, as his *House*, by Abraham? *His expected* INFANT, Isaac.

• What *house* was the SEED which shall proceed out of *thine own bowels*? AN INFANT.

• What *house* was the SEED which the Lord SHALL GIVE thee of this young woman? AN INFANT.

• In these ten instances, (and twenty might be added) the term *house* MUST signify INFANTS:—it CAN signify nothing else: and, moreover, it signifies INFANTS, though *not actually present*.

• With these ten instances of the signification of the term *house* in Old Testament language, before your eyes, and with every demonstration of the CONTINUED sense and ADOPTION of the term by the Apostles, to the same purport, and intention, and without variation, in the N. T. give me leave to ask you, Sir,

“WHAT DID THE APOSTLES BAPTIZE, WHEN THEY SAY THEY BAPTIZED HOUSES?”

“The question admits but of one answer: in giving *that*, let Conscience and Common sense do their duty.

“To conclude;”—what would a pious Hebrew Christian reading the New Testament have understood by the term *House*, in the Apostles' days, when he found it in various parts of their (sacred) writings? Could he, *possibly*, have separated the idea of *Infants* from it?—And, if he had been told that it was to be taken as *excluding* Infants, would he not have complained of the deception practised on him? Would he not have said, “If the N. T. writers use this word in a sense never before used in our nation, a sense entirely new, and contradictory to common and popular acceptance, *why did they not tell us so?* How are we to understand them, if not by the language they use?—And, how are we to understand their language, if not in its popular,

customary, and *fixed* acceptance;—the same as that in which it has uninterruptedly been employed, from the days of our father Abraham, to this day;—and, in fact, in which it is employed, *at this very day?*”

Now, what term more decisive and unequivocal could have been adopted by the sacred writers, for the purpose of assuring us that the Apostles baptised children: The Greek words Παις, βρεφος, βρεφυλλιον, Τεκνον, and their corresponding words, in Latin, Italian, French, and English, such as *puer, puerulus, infante, enfant, infant, child, &c.* are ambiguous. If then, the historian had said, “The apostles baptised men, women and *children;*” or “When Lydia and her *children* were baptised”—this might perhaps have satisfied some who now doubt on the subject of baptising children. But it would not have satisfied prejudice. It would be easy in this case, to quote such passages as these, “The *childe* of the age of *fourteen yere.*” “The last will and testament of the *little infant (infantulus)* Adald; aged *eighteen*—Gen. xxxvii. 30.” “The *child* (Joseph) is not; and I, whither shall I go?” [Note. Joseph at this time was sixteen years old.] Gen. xlv. 20.—“And we said unto my Lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, *a little one, &c.*—[This is spoken of Benjamin, son of Jacob, then upwards of thirty years old,] and hundreds of others from various languages, of the same import. From all which, the conclusion might be drawn, that the *children* mentioned as baptised by the apostles, were in all probability such children as Joseph and Benjamin in the texts quoted above. Hence the subject would have been as unsettled as can be imagined.—In this ambiguity of language, the sacred historian has chosen a word more determinate and settled in its signification, than the word *children*. He has told us that the apostles baptised (ὀικος) *Families*.

But the positive and decisive fact, that the apostles baptised young children, may be set in a still clearer light, by

a farther examination of the sacred record. The evidence already adduced, appears to me amply sufficient; yet in a subject that has been so much controverted, it is well to bring forward abundant testimony.

For this purpose, we turn from the history of Lydia's baptism, to that of the Jailor, recorded also in the 16th chapter of the Acts. Ver. 27-34. "And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, "Do thyself no harm; for we are all here." Then he called for a light, and sprang in; and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas; and brought them out, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house" (*οἶκος*.) And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house, (*οἰκία*.) And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptised he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, (*οἶκον*) he set meat before them; and, having believed in God, he rejoiced with all his house;" (*πανοῖκῃ* with all his family.) Here are incidental circumstances, which strongly show that the Jailor was in the *prime* of life.—Such as his impetuosity and the vehemence of his passions: as soon as he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword, and was about to kill himself.—This does not look like an aged father of a family surrounded by a number of adult children. Again; as soon as Paul called to him, he *SPRANG* into the prison. The action here is that of a man in the vigour of his days. But this man, thus vigorous, had a *numerous* family: this appears from the text; "*he and ALL his*"—he rejoiced with *ALL* his house. Now, surely, every circumstance here shows that the Jailor was a man in the vigour of his days. *He believed*, and he, with all his (numerous family) were

baptised. Now, considering the ambiguity of the words, *child, infant, puer, βρεφός*, &c., we appeal to any impartial reader, to say whether the record of the baptism of the Jailor and his family, taken with all the attendant circumstances, does not afford more decisive evidence in favour of what is commonly called infant-baptism, than if it had been said in express terms, that the Jailor and his little ones were baptised. For, in this case, as we have before seen, it might be said, Joseph was called a child at the age of sixteen; and Benjamin, a little one when more than thirty years old—and who can tell but that the Jailor's little ones were such as these. But when we see the Jailor driving headlong with youthful ardour, and springing with an elasticity and vigour, that we know do not belong to old age, and at the same time have unequivocal evidence in the use of the words, **ALL HIS**, that he had a numerous family, the matter is put out of all doubt. The life of man, at that time, and long before, had been reduced to three score years and ten; as is the case now. But we know what the course of nature now is. We know that a man in the vigour of life now, with a numerous family has young children. And we are assured that the Jailor had young children too, not by doubtful phrases, but by the uniformity of the course of nature.

Should any doubt be entertained respecting the word (*πανοικί*) translated, *with all his house*, ver. 34, it may be observed for the sake of those who read Greek, that Hesychius renders it by the words *συν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ*, *with his whole family*; and that it occurs in the Septuagint, Exod. i. 1. in the same signification, *with his whole family*. In the English translation, this verse reads thus; “Now these are the names of the children of Israel that came into Egypt; every man and his household [family] came with Jacob.” Here the *man* is distinguished from his *family*; and here also, the word under consideration means children,

descendants; for the persons designated, are expressly said to come out of the loins of Jacob. When, therefore the Jailor is said to rejoice *πανοικί*, we are sure that it was with his family, his children, that he rejoiced, or, according to the definition before given, with those who ate at the same table with him.

“ St. Luke was a good Greek writer; and he relates the history of the Jailor with his customary precision. He says, St. Paul advised him, “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, with thy family. And they spoke unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house-hold (*οίκίαν*) all in the jail,” &c. He brought all in his power under the word; as Cornelius had done; but it is not said that all who were in his *house-hold*, attendants, prisoners, &c. were baptised. No: but he and his family were baptised: he rejoiced with his family, having believed (*πεπιστεύκως*) in God. All heard the word; but only his own family accompanied the Jailor in baptism. Certainly this Jailor became one of the Philippian brethren; and certainly he would not loose the opportunity of attending the consolatory exhortation at Lydia’s; and of bidding his spiritual fathers farewell. The baptism of this family is spoken of with ease and coolness, as was that of Lydia; as the ordinary course of events: the children accompanying the father, as is natural.” *Facts and Evidences*, &c. pa. 33.

Before we take leave of the facts recorded in the xvth chapter of Acts, it may not be amiss to notice the 40th verse: because that passage has been used in an attempt to show, that the family of Lydia consisted of adults, who were baptised on a profession of their faith. The words are, “ 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 assumption is, that the *brethren* seen by the apostles, were members of

Lydia's family. But where is the proof? We know that the apostles were led out of prison publicly, by the principal officers of the place, in a very kind and civil manner; and were *entreated* to leave the city. Now, what proves that they did not, after retiring to their lodgings at Lydia's, go round and see the brethren that lived in Philippi? The compressed narrative of Luke does not forbid this supposition. But there is another, much more probable than this, and which I have no doubt expresses the truth of the case. We certainly know that the apostle Paul founded a church at Philippi. He first visited that city about the year of our Lord 53; and when he took his departure thence, he went to Thessalonica (see Acts xvii. 1.) About the year 62 he wrote his letter to the Philippians. In that letter he mentions the affectionate attachment of the brethren of Philippi to him, and the *repeated* proofs they had given of their love. "Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no CHURCH communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only: For even in *Thessalonica ye sent ONCE AND AGAIN to my necessity.*" iv. 4-16. Here is positive evidence that, although Luke mentions only the conversion of Lydia and the Jailor, that a church was organized at Philippi before Paul left the place: and one would suppose, a flourishing church too.—For when the apostle was labouring for others, these affectionate believers sent *once and again* their contributions for his support. With this, let us bear in mind that Paul and his companion lodged with Lydia; that there were then no houses for christians to worship in; and that they were accustomed, therefore, to meet in private *dwellings; and we shall see at once who

* Romans xvi. 5. Likewise greet *the Church that is in their house*, i. e. the house of Aquilla and Priscilla, ver. 3.—See also 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

were the *brethren* that Paul saw at Lydia's house.— Doubtless, they were the members of the church organized there, and among them their latest convert, the Jailor, who, rejoicing in the salvation of which he had partaken, would surely accompany his prisoner just discharged, to the house where the brethren had been accustomed to meet. It was not the family of Lydia, her children alone, that the apostle comforted before he took his leave of this affectionate people, but *the brethren*, the members of the church of Philippi.

The next express mention of the baptism of a family is made in Acts xviii. 8. "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house (*ὅλω*, family), and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptised." That Crispus and his family were baptised, is beyond doubt. But it may be said that they all *believed*. Admit that they did. We know that the ordinary officers of the synagogue, were called *Elders* because they were advanced in age; and that the Chief ruler of the synagogue would of course be an old man. While therefore Lydia was probably a young and active woman, and the Jailor was a man in the prime of life, their young families were baptised, and no mention made of the faith of any person but the parent, the head of the family. But here, where we have moral certainty, although the historian does not specify it, that the head of the family was an aged man, we are told that he believed with all his house, and they were baptised. The children in this case were adult, and must give evidence of docility before they could be admitted

Col. iv. 15. Salute the brethren that are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and *the church which is in his house*.

Philemon 2. Paul presents his salutation, "To the beloved Apphia, and to Archippus, and to *the church in thy house*." Let these passages be compared with Acts xvi. 40, the verse under examination, and with Philip, iv. 14, 15, 16, and there will be no doubt respecting the brethren seen at the house of Lydia.

into the School of Christ. This is precisely what on pedobaptist principles we should require; and on hearing that the family of an aged man was baptised, we should expect to hear of the profession of their faith. This case is something of the nature of an exception to a general rule—*exceptio firmat regulam*. *Lydia believed*, and was baptised with her family—*the Jailor believed*, and was baptised with his family—*Old Crispus believed, with his family*, and they were baptised. The putting of these parts of scripture together brings to my mind with irresistible evidence, the truth as before stated respecting the baptising of Lydia and the Jailor with their children.

Yet while I make the above admission, it ought not to be concealed from the reader, that some very ingenious men have strongly doubted whether the expression “Crispus believed on the Lord with all his house” is to be construed literally; they seem rather inclined to maintain that it means no more, than that on the faith of their parents they were brought into a state of discipleship. This doubt on one hand, and opinion on the other, are founded on what the Apostle Paul says, 1 Cor. i. 14. “I thank God that I baptised none of you **BUT CRISPUS** and Gaius. It will be recollected here, that there were divisions in the Corinthian Church. One was of Paul, another of Apollos, &c.; and there were strenuous efforts to put down the apostolic authority of Paul. The apostle wished to show that he, in no way whatever, had any hand in these divisions. He even thanked God that he had baptised none but *Crispus* and Gaius. None of whom? Certainly of the members of the Corinthian Church who were engaged in those party disputes. But one would suppose from the narrative of Luke, and indeed from the nature of the case that he who baptised Crispus, baptised his family also.—Hence it has been inferred that the Children of Crispus were too young to be engaged in the management of

Church affairs and in ecclesiastical disputes; and that when Crispus is said to have believed with his whole family—and that they were baptised, it means no more than that he, on becoming a disciple, had his whole family made disciples too. This conclusion is strengthened by the consideration that Crispus was a Jew; else how should he be chief ruler of the synagogue? Now it was a maxim among the Jews, as stated by their great Rabbi Maimonides, “If an Israelite find a heathen infant, and baptise him in the name of a proselyte, behold, he is a proselyte.” Now if the spirit of this maxim were applied by the historian to the case of Crispus, he might very well have used the manner of speaking employed in the text. There is really something ingenious and plausible in this reasoning. It is left to the consideration of the reader.

The next express mention of the baptism of a family is made by the apostle Paul 1. Cor. i. 16. “And I baptised also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptised any other.” The phraseology of Paul here is very remarkable. He had affirmed before, that he had baptised none of the Corinthian members—*except Crispus and Gaius*: that is none of those who were raising party disputes. After this general declaration, he sees fit to affirm that he had baptised the *family* of Stephanas; but, *as for the rest* [for so *λοιπών* ought to be rendered] he baptised none. “*As for the rest*”—to what does this refer? “I do not know whether I baptised *any other*”—any other what? Let any one, who can perceive the grammatical construction of words, answer. Surely the apostle means to say, as for other baptised families, I do not know that I baptised any of them. This is the plain natural meaning of this passage, and it shows very forcibly that the baptising of families was a very common occurrence. Observe the uncertainty with which the apostle speaks. He knew, indeed, that he had baptised the family of Stephanas; but he did not know

that he had baptised any other. Surely if the baptising of a family had been a rare and extraordinary occurrence, the apostle could not have expressed himself thus.— But on the supposition, that during his long abode at Corinth, multitudes of families had been baptised, we can easily see how he might have felt uncertain, whether he baptised any but that of his particular friend Stephanas. This instance then, is of great value in the argument; because from the manner in which it is introduced, we learn that it was quite common in the Corinthian church to baptise children, that is families. So decisive does this appear to my mind, that if the New Testament contained nothing else on the subject, I should have no doubt that the apostles practised, what is* improperly called, infant baptism. Let this text be read to any person of plain common sense, thus, “I baptised the family of Stephanas; and of the rest, I do not know whether I baptised any other:” or, using the English version, “I do not know whether I baptised any other besides.”—And let him be asked, *any other what?* or let a school boy parse the sentence, and say what, according to grammatical propriety the adjectives *any other* agree with. Or propose this Greek sentence to a young collegian, or any person that can read the language; Εὐβαπτίσθη δὲ καὶ τὸν Στεφάνου ΟΙΚΟΝ; λοιπὸν οὐκ οἶδα εἰ τινα ἄλλον εὐβαπτίσθη, and let him say what substantive *ἄλλον* agrees with. Certainly with *οἶκον*, family. Hence, I can have no doubt but that the baptism of families was a very common occurrence during the year and six months of Paul’s abode at Corinth. And I can

* I say *improperly*, because the phrase *infant baptism* put in opposition to *adult baptism*, seems to imply that there are two baptisms, of different character. It would be precisely as proper to speak of infant circumcision, as opposed to adult circumcision, and as a different rite. But who does not see the absurdity of this?

well believe, that it was a common occurrence at every place where a christian church was founded, although not many instances are mentioned by the sacred historian.— Luke does not mention in *Acts* the baptism of the family of Stephanas, and we should never have known any thing of that, and the important information connected with it, had there not been a schism in the church at Corinth; and had it not been for the eagerness of the apostle Paul to show that he was no partizan.

But we are told that the instance of the baptism of the family of Stephanas affords no support to our doctrine, because they were all adults; as appears from 1 Cor. xvi. 15. “ I beseech you brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves unto the ministry of the saints.)”—— Hence it is inferred, that the house of Sthephanas consisted of persons of mature age, and that they were baptised on a profession of their faith. Now admitting that all this is just, which by the way we cannot do, it by no means invalidates our inference that the baptism of families was common in the practice of the apostles. But let us examine this subject. And here the reader of the original will perceive a difference in the words used by Paul, when he speaks of the baptism of the *family* i. 16, and of the *house* of Stephanas xvi. 15. In the first case; he uses the word ΟΙΚΟΣ; and in the last, the word οἰκίαν. Our translation renders both by the same word, *house*. But surely the difference made in the original ought to be preserved in the version. The sense in which Paul used this last word may be learned from Phil. iv. 22, “ All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar’s HOUSEHOLD (οἰκίαις;) i. e. Cæsar’s domestics: And how he used the term οἶκος may be learned from 1 Tim. iii. 4. A bishop must be, “ one that ruleth well his own HOUSE, having his CHILDREN in

subjection with all gravity. In speaking then of the baptism of the *house* (οἶκον) of Stephanas, Paul means his *children*; in speaking of the kindness of the *house* of Stephanas, and their attendance on the brethren, he means his *domestics*, those of his household. But it ought to be understood that (οἶκον) household includes perhaps the (οἶκος) house, or family. Now there is a question, to what service did the οἶκον devote themselves? It is entirely a gratuitous assumption that they were ministers of the gospel. The word ΔΙΑΚΟΝΙΑ means any kind of service, for instance, serving at the table, procuring food, affording support, rendering offices of kindness, distributing alms, performing the service of a religious teacher, &c. Now, out of all these significations, it seems to me strange that any should fix on the last, and assign that office to the household (domestics) of Stephanas. I confess, however, that this passage, as it stands in the original, presents difficulties in its grammatical structure, which I do not know well what to do with. I speak here, not as a theologian or polemic, but simply as a grammarian. And, adopt what system of doctrine I may, the difficulty presses on me: nor do I stand alone in this case. The harshness and difficulty of the original has embarrassed every commentator that I have seen. The best solution of the sentence that I have met with, is to be found in the Pamphlet already quoted, under the title of *Facts and Evidences on the Subject of Baptism*; and it is here presented to the reader.

“The mischance that our translators should have used the terms *house* and *household* interchangeably, though scripture preserves the distinction, is glaring in the instance of the family of Onesiphorus, which in one text is rendered *house*, in the other *household*, notwithstanding the same word is used in both places; and the same persons are certainly intended. But, it has proved much more unfortunate,

that our translators have used one word; *household*, to express both the *family* and the *household* of Stephanas, though Scripture uses *two words* in order to mark the distinction, and certainly does NOT mean the same persons. This has produced confusion, and has given occasion to various weak and inconsistent arguments. The passage that alludes to the *family* of Stephanas, has no difficulty:—but that respecting the *household* of Stephanas, is a tissue of difficulties. The first remark on it is, that, as it stands, it is neither Greek, grammar, nor common sense:—it cannot be regularly construed; all commentators have felt this, and have attempted to force it into sense by supplementary words. Whitby paraphrases “I beseech you brethren [*seeing*] ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of [*the gospel in*] Achaia, and that they have [*ever since*] addicted themselves to the ministry of the Saints; that you submit yourselves to such [*giving Reverence and Honour to them*] and to every one that helpeth with us and laboureth.” Doddridge renders, “And I beseech you brethren *as* ye know the Household of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and *as* they have set themselves to ministring to the Saints, that you subject yourselves to such, and to every associate in that good work and labour.” Bishop Pearce, with a greater share of critical sagacity than the former, renders “And I beseech you, brethren, **HAVE REGARD** to the family of Stephanas [*because THEY ARE* the first fruits of Achaia, and have set themselves about the *work of* ministring to the saints) that ye would submit yourselves unto such, and to every one who worketh with *them* and laboureth.” The Bishop saw clearly that “**IT IS,**” in the *singular*, will not construe with “**THEY ARE**” in the *plural*. He saw too, that the phrase “I beseech you brethren”—must have an immediate subject; and therefore he renders “I beseech you have regard.” In his notes he gives as his reason for this version

that many MSS. read "*they are the first fruits*"—and to qualify this plural, I add, some copies read (vide Pagninus, and all the Latins)—"Stephanas and Fortunatus who are"—others read "Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, who are"—These are sufficient proofs of confusion, without seeing others: and justify dissatisfaction with the passage as it stands. To prepare our minds for a correct view of the place, we must first enquire, what is the Apostle's intention in writing it? and to answer this question we must consider the whole of the Apostle's theme, and begin our enquiries some way back.

"The first thing remarkable is, the Apostle's description of Timothy, verse 10, "*He worketh the work—ERGAZETAI ERGON,—of the Lord, as I also do!*" the next is that St. Paul desires their submission to *co-workers—SYNERGONTI.*" There seems, therefore, to be a mutual reference between these words; which leads us to infer, that he who "*worketh the work, as I also do,*" must be a *co-worker*, i. e. *co-worker with me.* This is implied in the *us* of our translators: but it dismisses the "*associate in that good work*" of Doddridge; and it dismisses the "*worketh with them*" of Bishop Pearce. Let us see, now, whether by bringing these words somewhat closer together, we may not discover their true station.

"If Timothy come to Corinth, take care that he be without fear [or vexation from your party disputes] among you; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do: Let no one, therefore, despise him, but accompany him on his journey, that he may come to me in safety; for I and the brethren expect him. And as to Apollos our brother, I and the brethren exhorted him much to come unto you; but he was by no means inclined to come now [during your party dissensions] yet, he will come, when he hath a convenient season. And I beseech you, brethren, that ye submit yourselves unto such [as Timothy and Apollos; but

Timothy, especially,] and to every one co-working *with me*, and labouring.” Here every thing is in its proper place, and reference: and to induce their greater care of Timothy, when he arrived, the Apostle reminds them that the *household* of Stephanas had set themselves to do acts of hospitality and kindness to Christian ministers and brethren—suppose on their journey:—at once an example and a stimulus! Why did not St. Paul, then, recommend Timothy to lodge at that residence?—Probably, for a reason already suggested; that Stephanas resided NOT IN Corinth; but at some small distance from it, in Achaia. The Corinthian Church, then, was not exhorted to submit itself to the *household of Stephanas*; the notion is unreasonable: the cause assigned is absurd. What! Crispus and Gaius, with the whole church, submit themselves to the *servants* of Stephanas, because these servants very readily and cheerfully offered their kind assistance to travelling brethren! Where is the congruity between cause and effect? But that Crispus and Gaius, with the Corinthian Church, might shew all deference and honour to Timothy, might lodge and entertain him respectfully, and bring him forward on his journey, with every mark of christian attention, is exactly coincident with what the apostle had requested before.

“ It is well known that the concluding chapter of other epistles—that to the Romans, for instance, is composed of *memoranda*, addressed by the Apostle to his Christian friends; and when introduced into the text, not placed precisely in due order.—The same is the case here; and the reference to the *household* of Stephanas, is neither more nor less than a marginal note. It could occasion no confusion, in the original, from the manner of writing it.—An instance, in point, as practised by the modern Greeks, may be seen in a *fac-simile*, given in Hobhouse’s *Travels in Albania*, &c.

“ The whole, I conceive stood thus:

“ Now, if Timothy come, see that he may be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also work. Let no man, therefore, despise him; but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me, for I look for him with the brethren. As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come to you; but his will was not to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.— Watch ye, stand fast in the faith; quit you like men: be strong. Let all things be done with charity, [and] I beseech you, brethren, that ye submit yourselves to such, and to every one that helpeth with me and laboureth.”

You know the household of Stephanas, [inasmuch as he is the first fruits of Achaia] that they have set themselves to do services of accommodation (to DIACONIZE) to the saints.

“ I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore ACKNOWLEDGE them that are such.”

“ Strange, surely! were it true that the Apostle should command the Corinthian Church, to SUBMIT to the servants, but only to *acknowledge* the master: only to *acknowledge* the brother who had refreshed his spirit, and the spirits of the Corinthians, to whom he writes; but to SUBMIT to his servants, whose kindness, though extremely laudable, terminated on strangers, from whom neither the Corinthians nor Paul had received the same “refreshment” as they had from Stephanas. To complete this absurdity, observe, that Stephanas: as a member of the Corinthian Church, is commanded by the Apostle, among others, to SUBMIT (“*giving Reverence and Honour,*” as Whitby paraphrases) *to his own servants!* And this becomes absolutely MONSTROUS, if it be

insisted on, that these were the *sons* of Stephanas; for then, that eminent Christian, a brother, a deputy from the Church, the *first fruits of Achaia*, is commanded to **SUBMIT TO HIS OWN CHILDREN!!!**"

The baptism of the family of Cornelius has not yet been mentioned, because it is not expressly noticed in the history. There can, however, be no reasonable doubt on the subject. The family with which Cornelius was accustomed to worship God, would surely be assembled by him to hear the divinely commissioned apostle who came to show the way of salvation; to speak words by which he and all his house (*οἶκος* family) should be saved, Acts xi. 14. We therefore, fearlessly put down the family of Cornelius as another instance of family baptism.

The family of Onesiphorus, on which the apostle invokes blessings, 2 Tim. i. 16; and which he affectionately salutes, 2 Tim. iv. 19, may, in all probability, be added as another; but this we shall not urge. Now, without again insisting on the decisive evidence before produced, respecting the direct and proper signification of the word ΟΙΚΟΣ, we would ask any one to take as many families as are recorded in the New Testament to have been baptised, above him or below him on the street where he resides, or in the pew which he occupies in church, or in the neighbourhood where he lives, and ascertain whether he can find as many in succession, or taken promiscuously, in which there are no children. Let him calculate the probabilities on the subject: in other words, let him calculate the chances that, as the course of nature is, six households may be taken promiscuously, and no infants be found in any of them, or rather not one infant found among them all! It is not extravagant to say, that there would be thousands and thousands to one against it. The evidence then *against* the supposition that the apostles did not baptise infants, as it appears on the records of their proceedings, is irresistible.

In connection with the testimony of Scripture respecting

the practice of the apostles, it may not be amiss to present a brief account of the most direct and explicit testimonies of the Fathers. And for this purpose we present the following extract from *The Virginia Religious Magazine*, Vol. II, pp. 206-211.

“Origen, a man of most extraordinary genius and learning, was born towards the close of the second, and died about the middle of the third century. From his writings we have three clear testimonies in favour of infant baptism. The first is in his 14th homily on Luke “Little ones, are baptized for the remission of sins.” And again in the same discourse “By the sacrament of baptism, the pollutions of our birth are put off, and therefore infants are baptized.”—“What reason can be given for the practice of baptizing infants, except this; that none is free from pollution, no not if he be but a day old.”

“The second testimony, of this eminent man, is in his 8th sermon on Leviticus, where he has these words “Let it be inquired, since baptism is given for the remission of sins, why, according to the usage of the church, *that baptism, is given to infants.*”

“His third testimony, is found, in his discourse on the epistle to the Romans, where we have these remarkable words “*The church hath received a tradition from the Apostles, to give baptism unto infants.*”

“Cyprian, was made bishop of Carthage, in the year 248, and ten years afterwards received the crown of martyrdom. The year before his death (viz. 257) he sat in council with sixty-six bishops, whose decrees may be seen in his Epist. (58) to Fidus, which is still extant. Fidus had proposed the question whether it was lawful for infants to be baptized on the second or third day; or whether it was necessary to wait until the eighth, as was directed in the case of circumcision. By the way, it may be observed, that the propounding of such a question, shews that at that time, it was commonly believed that baptism held the same

place in the New which circumcision occupied in the Old dispensation: and that no doubts were at that time entertained of the right of infants to baptism. But if this truth were not sufficiently evident from merely proposing such a question to a numerous council of bishops, their unanimous answer, will remove every shadow of doubt. They determined without a dissenting voice, “That the mercy and grace of God ought not to be denied to any infant, however young—that if any were to be kept from baptism, it should be rather those of full age who have committed great sins: but since these, when they embrace the faith, are not prohibited from baptism, much more ought not the infant to be forbidden who being new-born hath no sin but that which he hath derived from Adam by his birth”—In the conclusion they say “that as none were to be refused baptism, so especially this was to be held and observed with respect to infants and new-born children.”

“Here then, we have the testimony of a whole council, consisting of above sixty bishops in favor of infant baptism; and as they were not brought together to decide this question, the unanimity of such a number, may be considered as decisive evidence, that in the time of Cyprian, there was but one opinion and one practice in the whole Christian church, with respect to infant baptism. If they had been collected, to determine whether infants ought to be baptized, it would have furnished evidence, whatever their design might be, that there were some antipedobaptists at that time, for it was not usual for councils to meet, for the consideration of questions, not disputed. But as the question before them was, whether infants might lawfully be baptized before the eighth day; whilst they gave their opinion upon this point, they implicitly teach us, not only, that *they* all believed in infant baptism, but that nobody else doubted of it.

“As to the authenticity, and genuineness of the Epistle of Cyprian, which contains the decrees of this council, we

have the fullest satisfaction. It is quoted by Jerome, in his dialogue against the Pelagians; and Augustine cites it more than once, and sets it down almost entire, as a testimony of great weight against Heretics. In his 28th epist. to Hieronymus, he says, “Blessed Cyprian decreed with a number of his fellow-bishops, that a child new-born, might be properly baptized, not thereby making any new decree but retaining the faith of the church, before most firmly established.”

“About the same period, lived the author, whose work goes under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite. In his discourse concerning the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, he proposeth it as a question; “why children who cannot yet understand, are notwithstanding made partakers of the *saered birth* from God.” By which baptism is undoubtedly intended. In answer to this question, he says, “Many things of which we do not now see the reason are worthy of God—We affirm of this the same things, which our *divine guides* have handed down to us.” Again, “Our divine guides appointed that infants should be admitted after the *saered manner*.” By divine guides, saith Maxentius, “is meant the Apostles.” Which is evident enough. It ought not to prejudice the testimony of this writer, that his book has been falsely ascribed to Dionysius the convert of St. Paul at Athens; for this has come to pass in all probability, through the ignorance of transcribers, who finding the author’s name to be Dionysius, hastily supposed that he was the very person mentioned in the Acts. It is agreed by all, that the writer was a very learned man and his antiquity will appear from this circumstance, that as early as the year 420 Theodorus debated the question, whether or not the author was Dionysius the Areopagite.

“Gregory Nazianzen, flourished about the middle of the fourth century. From him we have the following testimony: “If thou hast an infant, let not iniquity get time, but let it be *sanctified*, let it be consecrated to the Spirit: and

whereas the Heathens use charms, and amulets to secure their children, do you bestow on them the *Trinity*, that great and good phylactery or preservative.”—Orat. 4, on Baptism. In the same discourse he says; “What shall we say concerning those that are yet children, and neither know the loss, nor are sensible of the grace of baptism? Shall we also baptize them?” To which he answers; “Yes by all means, if any danger press, they should be *sanctified*, when they have no sense of it, that they may not die unsealed and uninitiated.” In proof of this he observes, that, circumcision, which was a sacramental seal (*μυστήριον σφραγίς*) was used to those that had no exercise of reason. After this, it is true, he proceeds to give his own private opinion, that those children who were in no danger of death; might defer it, until about three years of age, when they might be taught to answer something, although they did not understand the meaning of the words.

“In the same century, lived Ambrose: speaking of those who made Adam’s sin no otherwise hurtful to posterity than by the example, he presses them with this absurdity, that their opinion, “*nullifies the baptism of infants*, which in this case, would be capable of adoption, but not of pardon.” He says in another place, “By Jordan’s being driven back, are signified the mysteries of baptism, by which the little ones that are baptised are cleansed from the sin of their natural state.”

“In the close of this age also, lived Chrysostom, whose death is placed in 407—one of the most celebrated preachers of antiquity. In his homily to the Neophyti, he has these words, “For this cause we baptize children although they have no sin.” These words deserve to be particularly noticed, because the Pelagians made a great handle of them in the dispute about original sin. They interpreted the words, as though Chrysostom had said, that infants were free from *original sin*; But Augustine confuted them,

by referring to the word (*αμαρτηματα*) used by Chrysostom, which properly signifies actual sins. Again, in his 4th homily on Genesis speaking of baptism as the christian circumcision, he says, "It hath no determinative time but is lawful in childhood, middle life and old age."

"Jerome, was born in 342 and lived until 420, and is esteemed one of the most learned of the Fathers. In his 9th Epist. to Lata, he says; "Unless you believe that those children of Christians who receive not baptism, are the guilty persons, and not their parents who neglected to bring them to Christ's embraces," &c.

"In his dialogue against Pelagius; (lib. 3) the question being asked by Crito; Why infants are baptized, Atticus answers; "That their sins may be pardoned"—And again "the infant is freed in baptism from the bond of Adam's sin."

"Paulinus, was cotemporary with Jerome, from whom we have this testimony; "The Priest brings the infant out of the font, white as snow, in body, in heart, in habit."

"Next comes that great champion of Orthodoxy, St. Augustine, who was born in the 4th, and died in the 5th century. The passages in his writings in which infant baptism is expressly mentioned and vindicated, are too numerous to be quoted. But he affirms that it had been the perpetual doctrine of the whole church in all ages before him, expressly including that of the apostles.

"In his discourse concerning baptism written in opposition to the Donatists Lib. 4. c. 23, he has these words, "This is held as tradition by the *universal church*, when "little infants are baptized which certainly are not yet "able to believe with the heart, or confess with the mouth, "and yet no christian will say that they are baptized to "no purpose." He then proceeds to observe, that as in the case of Isaac the seal of the righteousness itself followed in riper age, so also, "In baptized infants the sacrament of regeneration precedes, and if they hold fast

christian piety, conversion in the heart follows, the mystery whereof hath been already received in the body."

"Speaking, in another place, of infant baptism he says, "The doctrine itself gives us no trouble, being long since established in the christian church, by the highest authority." Again, "The question between them and us is not whether infants are to be baptized; for that infants should be baptized *nobody doubts*; and although they contradict us on the question which relates to its benefit, yet of this they entertain no doubt."

"In this dispute with the Pelagians, he says, "Doth Christ profit infants that are baptized, or doth he not?—He must needs say, that he doth profit, because he is prest with the authority of the church our mother"—"If they say that Christ does not profit infants baptized, they of necessity affirm that infants are superfluously baptized, but this, these very heretics dare not say, for they fly to this evasion, that they are not baptized for salvation, but for the kingdom of heaven."

"Epist. 39. "The baptism of infants is not superfluous, in order that by regeneration they may be freed from the condemnation received from Adam."

"Enchiridion c. 42. "From the infant new-born to decrepid old age, none are to be prohibited from baptism."

"I will conclude this list of testimonies by producing the decrees of the councils of Carthage and Miletus on this point; both of these sat about the beginning of the 5th century.

"Whosoever denies that infants are by the baptism of Christ freed from perdition, and made partakers of eternal life, let him be anathema."

"In the second it is said, that the catholic church every where diffused, always understood and asserted that this was an Apostolical practice."

This testimony is so illustrated and confirmed by scripture, that it comes to every unprejudiced understanding with great force.

Having now, as seems to me, fully established the doctrine, that, according to divine appointment, the sacrament of christian baptism is to be applied to the families of believers; it may be well to consider some what particularly that part of the general proposition laid down in the Confession of Faith, which states that, “ Infants descending from parents either both, or *but one* of them, professing faith in Christ and obedience to him” are to be baptised. And here it may be remarked, that in the instances adduced from scripture, there is, perhaps, not one, in which more than one parent is mentioned. Farther, in every instance of the baptism of a family, it is clearly ascertained, and generally, expressly stated, that the parent presenting children for baptism, believed. In the case of Lydia, although not a syllable is said of the faith of her family, it is said, in very emphatical terms, *that the Lord opened her heart to attend to the things which were spoken by Paul.*— And with this declaration, is connected the account of her baptism and that of her children. The stress is laid on the circumstance of *Lydia’s heart being opened, or her believing.* Hence, while the narrative authorises and requires indeed, the baptising of children, it requires faith in the parent.

In the case of the Jailor, too, the belief of only one parent is mentioned. And in general, it may be laid down as a rule founded on apostolic practice, that either both or one of the parents, should, as it is expressed in the catechism, profess faith and obedience.

But there is a passage of scripture, which, while it, in very strong terms, sanctions the particular application of christian baptism which we are vindicating, has a decisive bearing on the particular question under consideration. 1 Cor. vii. 14, “ 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." The primary and proper meaning of the word (ΑΓΙΑΖΩ) here rendered, sanctify, is to separate from a common and profane, and to consecrate to a particular and sacred use; and the word rendered holy, (ἅγιος) derived from the verb, signifies, that which is thus separated and consecrated; and when applied in the scriptures TO PERSONS, is uniformly limited to those who are visibly the people of God, and received into his church.

“ Thus the Jews, with their children, were called a holy nation,* not because they all truly loved and served God; for this they did not: but because they were his professing, visible people, separated to be such from the other nations of the earth. Thus visible Christians are denominated holy, or saints;† and amongst them the Apostle includes the children of the believer. I conclude, therefore, that they are the proper subjects of that ordinance which is the sign of their dedication to God, and the regular door of admission into the visible church.

“ Our brethren acknowledge that the common meaning of the word *holy*, which is here applied to the children of the believer, is as I have stated. But they object, that the same thing is applied to the unbelieving parent, who is also said to be sanctified or made holy by the believer. If, therefore, this holiness prove the baptism of the children, they urge that it will prove that of the unbelieving parent also. And to avoid both these, they assert that the holiness here mentioned must mean something quite different from what it does in all other places. Of this singular meaning I shall speak at large presently.

“ In answer to the objection, I must observe that there

* 34. Exod. xix. 6. *And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*

† 1 Pet. ii. 9. *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.* See the New Testament generally.

is some inaccuracy in the translation of this text. The Apostle, speaking of the parents, uses the past, not the present time.* The true version is, *the unbeliever hath been sanctified by the believer*. The Apostle is answering the question, whether a believer might lawfully continue in the marriage state with the unbeliever? His decision is that they should not separate and he appears to reason thus upon the point. ‘Let them continue together; for there have been instances heretofore of unbelievers brought to the faith and profession of the true religion, and into the church of Christ, by means of their believing partners: and there is reason to hope for the same thing in future. And were it not for this consoling prospect, your children would be considered unclean, would not be admitted into the church: for there would not be sufficient ground to hope that they would be trained up as becometh Christians, which is the great reason why any are received into the visible church. But now are they holy, received into the church by baptism, **JUST AS THEY WOULD BE IF BOTH PARENTS WERE BELIEVERS.**’ This interpretation appears to set the whole matter in a natural and intelligible light. It completely removes the objection, by assigning to the holiness here attributed to the parents and the children an uniform meaning, namely that of dedication to God; which, at the same time, is the uniform scriptural use of the word.

* *The original is, Ηγιασται γαρ ὁ ἀνηρ ὁ ἀπίστος, &c. I make no apology for recurring so frequently to critical emendations of our version of the scriptures. It is, in the general, an excellent one. But, whether people choose to know it or not, the fact is, that our English translation of the Bible is the work of men uninspired and fallible, however learned and upright. The original scriptures alone are our infallible standard; and they are as open to investigation now as ever they were.*

“According to our brethren, the Apostle’s meaning is, that the children were legitimate, not bastards. Is not this sufficiently refuted by the fact, that though this word, holy, with its derivatives is used about six hundred times in the scriptures, it never has, nor is any where else pretended to have any such meaning? But besides; if this be indeed the Apostle’s meaning, about what, I pray, is he arguing? For he evidently does form an argument about something. Does he infer that the parents had been lawfully married to each other, because their children were legitimate? Nothing could be more absurd; for the legitimacy of children must ever take for granted the validity of their parents’ marriage, instead of proving it. Does the Apostle mean to inform them, that if they had not been lawfully married, their children would have been bastards? Wonderful instruction this indeed! In fine, the question was not, whether the marriage had been rightly formed according to the laws of their country, nor whether their children were legitimate or not; for these things they must have known quite as well as the Apostle: but whether Christianity did not so influence and modify the marriage relation, that when one of the parties became a believer, he or she should separate from the unbeliever: a point on which the early converts might naturally enough start a scruple. To this question our brethren’s interpretation of the text exhibits no shadow of an answer. Ours on the other hand, applies directly to the question. The parents are commanded not to separate, because there is reason, from past experience, to hope that the believer may convert the unbeliever. And the lawfulness of their continuing together is farther illustrated by an allusion to the well known practice of baptizing their children. Whether this exposition be not every way more worthy of acceptance than that of our brethren, I leave to every impartial inquirer after truth to determine.”

We have now shown that the Church of God was organized in the house (family) of Abraham; that the initiatory ordinance was applied to children from that time to the coming of Christ; that no excluding precept was given by our blessed Saviour; that the apostles in executing their commission would naturally and of course include infants in the number of disciples; that they did in fact in many instances baptise families in which, according to the course of nature there must have been infants; and finally, that the *Fathers* of the Christian church do unequivocally testify that the baptism of children was received from the apostles. And this, I think fully supports the doctrine, and authorises the practice which I have undertaken to vindicate; that “NOT ONLY THOSE WHO DO ACTUALLY PROFESS FAITH IN, AND OBEDIENCE UNTO CHRIST, BUT ALSO THE INFANTS OF ONE OR BOTH BELIEVING PARENTS, ARE TO BE BAPTISED.” *Westminster Confession*, Chap. xxviii. § 4.

PART III.

ON THE MODE OF ADMINISTERING BAPTISM.

THE investigation which I have made of this subject has resulted in the conviction that,

“*Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.*” *Westminster Confession*, Chap. xxviii. § 3.

Before considering the scriptural evidence in favour of this proposition, I would offer one or two general remarks to the consideration of the reader.

1. The Christian religion every where regards matters of mere mode and form as trivial and unimportant. Its great object is, to bring men to worship the one living and true God in spirit and in truth. To accomplish this a visible church was instituted, ordinances were appointed, and

external worship required.—But no form has been prescribed in which we must sing the praises of God, or offer prayers to the Almighty: no particular posture in prayer or at the table of the Lord has been pointed out; nor, as we believe, has any particular mode of administering baptism been prescribed. It would indeed be strange, had a prescription in this particular contravened the genius and spirit of our religion.

2. Christianity was doubtless intended by its author for a universal religion. A contrary supposition would go against some of the very best hopes of the church, and some of the clearest predictions of holy writ. A religion intended for all nations, must, in its appointments, be adapted to the physical condition of the whole human race; and to the particular circumstances of all individuals. A rite, to which all ought to submit, ought to be suited to the case of all. Thus the initiatory sacrament of the church ought to be suited to the most intemperate regions of the north, and to the most burning and barren sands of the desert; to the countries where water abounds, and where it is most scarce and precious: it ought, too, to suit a person of the most delicate health, as well as one of the most vigorous constitution, one labouring under fatal disease, as well as in the bloom of youth. But if *submersion* is necessary to the due administration of baptism, then this adaptation, this suitableness does not exist. And this, may well be regarded as a strong presumption against the restriction of baptism to any particular mode of administration: especially when it is considered that baptism is a sign, and that the thing signified may be as well expressed by a spoonful as by an ocean of water. In establishing the proposition laid down, I shall show,

1. That the original word is not used by Greek writers in general, in the determinate and fixed sense of immersion. 2. That the examples of baptism recorded in scripture, do not limit the rite to the mode just specified. 3.

That the allusions, which are made in scripture to the thing signified by baptism generally, imply modes different from that of immersion.

For proof of the first proposition, reference is made to the first part of this Essay, page 2d, and the following.— In addition, we offer the following authorities. Origen, a Greek Father, and one of the most learned men of his age, says, “Elias did not *baptise* the wood on the altar which was to be washed, but ordered another to do it,” &c.— Here he alludes to 1 Kings, xviii. 38. “And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said Fill four barrels with water, and *pour it on* the burnt sacrifice and on the wood. Here *baptise* is used by Origen as equivalent to *pour on*.

Athanasius, (Tim. I. p. 219, Edit. Commel.) used the word (*ραπλιζομενον*) sprinkled, as clearly equivalent to (*βαπλιζομενον*) baptised.

An ancient oracle, quoted by Sydenham, runs thus:— *Ασχος βαπλιζε; δυναι δε του ε θεμυς εσθι.* i. e. *Baptise* him as a bottle; but it is not lawful to *immerse*, or *wholly to plunge* him under water. Here the word *baptise*, is put in opposition to *immerse* or *plunge*, and therefore cannot mean the same thing.

To this it may be added, that the oldest and most learned Lexicographers translate the word, *βαπλιζω*, by the following Latin terms: *Tingo*, *intingo*, *mergo*, *immergo*, *lavo*, *abluo*, *madefacio*, *purgo*, *mundo*. That is, they give to the original word no less than SEVEN different significations. We are justified then in affirming, that it ought by no means to be limited to the *one* signification of *immersion*.

Again, it is observed that the Greek language is very copious, and furnishes better opportunity to express with precision the various shades of meaning in words, than perhaps any other known tongue. We find a variety of

words in it, expressive of different applications of water. For instance, Πανλιζω signifies to *sprinkle*; Εχχέω to *pour out*; Αθω to *wash*; Δυνω or Δυπλω to *plunge*; &c. &c. Now, had our blessed Lord designed to prescribe a particular mode of administering baptism, it seems fair to conclude, that a word designating that mode, would have been used. Instead of this, we find constantly employed, a word which has confessedly *seven* varieties of signification. Does not this justify the conclusion, that our Lord intended, that the mode should be left indifferent? And if so, are we at liberty to limit and tie down to a particular manner, that which Jesus Christ has left undetermined? Attempts to do this, have produced more than half the rents and schisms, that have divided and disturbed the church.

But perhaps it may be thought by some that, although the word *baptise* is thus general in its signification, it is so limited in the New Testament usage, as to require submersion, to complete the rite. Let us examine. And here every one ought to lay aside the prejudices of the partizan, and enter the investigation with the coolness of an impartial critic.

The word βαπιζω occurs in various forms in the New Testament, sixty-four times. As it is intended to do full justice to the subject, these passages will be recited; and such remarks offered as the occasion may suggest.

No. I. Matt. iii. 5, 6. "Then went out to him [John] Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about Jordan; and (Εβαπιζοντο εν τω Ιορδανη) were baptised of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."

This is as strong a passage as any produced from the N. Testament in support of the opinion that baptism was performed by immersion. But does it warrant the conclusion which has been drawn from it? First it is observed,

1. That the account here given respects the baptism of John, which was a local and temporary institution; and therefore cannot certainly decide concerning an ordinance

equally intended for the *frozen* regions of Greenland and the *thirsty* plains of Africa; for the *healthy* and the *sick*.

2. The word βαπτίζω is, as we have seen, a general, indeterminate word—Does the Greek preposition (εν) here rendered *in*, fix the meaning so as to determine the mode in which John administered baptism? It is derived from a Hebrew word, the general idea of which is, *presence with*; and it is used by the New Testament writers in at least *sixteen* different senses—and these among them. *In*, *Among*, *With*, *By*, *Through*, *For*, *Of*, *To*, *Towards*, *Nigh to*, *Into*, *Consisting of*, *According to*, *When*, *That*. Can a preposition used in so many various senses, then, fix and limit the signification of a verb so indefinite as, *baptise*? Suppose baptise means definitely to *sprinkle* or *pour water on one*; then it would be most natural to render the words quoted above **THEY WERE SPRINKLED** by him, or *water was poured on them by him*, **NEAR TO Jordan**. Suppose that it means *to wash*, then the baptised persons might have stood near the margin of the river, or in the water, and the fluid might have been still poured on them. But here is no *submersion*. The matter then is still undecided. Is there any thing in the circumstances detailed in connection with the use of the word, which can settle the question? It is answered—We read that “*Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the country round about Jordan,*” that is, the people of all these places went out to be baptised by John. There may be some dispute what is the proper import of these words. Did the Evangelist mean that all the people of the places specified, went out to be baptised. Then the multitudes must have been immensely great. One may well believe this, who recollects the statement of Josephus, that *eleven hundred thousand* persons were taken or slain, when Jerusalem was taken by Titus. But if the words are not to be construed literally; we must suppose, to justify the figurative language of the Evangelist, that a *large*

proportion of the people flocked to the banks of Jordan for baptism. Now if John baptised only one *tenth part of the population* mentioned by the historian; supposing that he did this by submersion, and that he baptised one in the space of every three minutes, he must have stood eight hours per day in the water for three years to have accomplished his work!!* Persons may smile, some may perhaps scoff, on this idea being first presented to their minds. But we refer them to the words of the Evangelist, and the statements of the Jewish historian. *All* must either mean the *whole*, or a greater part, a large proportion. And if 1,100,000 persons were destroyed in Jerusalem, it is surely not extravagant to state the population at two millions. Let any one make the calculation for himself, and he will find that there is nothing ridiculous in our conclusion. If it were intended that we should believe as great an improbability as this there was need of a much stronger and more decisive word than (*βαπτίζω*) baptise, to express the thing. For myself, when I apply the ideas of common sense, and every day practice to these subjects, I cannot but believe that John stood on the bank of the river, *near* to Jordan, and being furnished with water by his disciples baptised the crowds by perfusion, in a very summary way.

No. II. Matt. iii. 11. "I indeed baptise you *with water*; (*ἐν ὕδατι*) but he that cometh after me is more mighty than I; whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptise you *with the Holy Ghost and with fire*," [*ἐν πνεύματι, ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ.*]

In this passage, the same preposition is used as in the preceding quotation. And here it is manifest that the substance used in baptism is designated, and not the mode of applying it. John used *water*—in Messiah's baptism, *the Spirit* is applied. If any thing can be learned respecting the mode of administration from this text, it is all in favour of affusion or pouring. Because, the promise which God has made of giving the Holy Spirit, is almost always couched

* Note.—Did John's ministry last more than three years?

in the phrase, "I will *pour out* my Spirit." Accordingly the people of God universally pray for the *out-pouring* of the Spirit. Now surely after this usage sanctioned by God himself, we ought not to affirm that the word, *baptise*, means properly to *immerse*, or *submerge*; and to read here, "I indeed immerse you in water, but he that cometh after me, shall *immerse* you in the *Holy Spirit*." Would any person venture to pray, that he might be thus immersed?

Nos. III. IV. Matt. iii. 13, 4. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptised of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me."

This passage affords no room for remark.

No. V. Matt. iii. 16. "And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him," &c.

The Greek here is ἀπο τῆς ὑδατος translated out of the water. The going up of Jesus out of the water is thought to afford conclusive evidence that he was immersed. We deny this—1. Because, going into the water (supposing that he did so) is not baptism; that is to be performed after the subject is in the water, and it then may be performed in various ways. But 2. I deny that Jesus went *into* the water. The word here rendered *out of*, in its ordinary natural meaning signifies *from*. It is so used verse 13. See above No. III, Jesus cometh *from* Galilee [ἀπο.] A hundred other instances might be adduced, such as, He came *from* [ἀπο] the field—He departed *from* them—Deliver us *from* evil, &c. &c. almost without end. We say then, that the words do not necessarily imply more than that our Saviour went down *to* the margin of the river to be baptised; and when the ceremony was performed, he went up *from* the water, that he might be seen by the multitude, when the Spirit visibly descended on him, that this testimony that he was sent by the Father, might be as public as possible.

Nos. VI. VII. Matt. xx. 22, 23. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that

I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with," &c.

The term here has reference to the sufferings endured by our blessed Lord, when the divine fury was poured on his head, and he was baptised with his own bloody sweat in Gethsemane; and more copiously with his own blood on the cross. Nothing as to the mode of *christian* baptism then can be determined from this metaphorical use of the word.

No. VIII. Matt. xxviii. 19. "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name," &c.

This passage determines nothing, except what has been before observed respecting the intended universality of the christian religion.

No. IX. Mark i. 4. "And John was baptising in the wilderness, and preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

Here the Greek words are (*βαπτίζων ἐν τῇ ἐρημῷ*), rendered baptising in the wilderness. The preposition following the verb, clearly designates the place where baptism was administering, viz. *in the wilderness*, and not the manner of baptising. And why may not the same purpose be served by it, when it is connected with the river Jordan. As it would be ridiculous to assert that John plunged his disciples into the wilderness, although the text says he was baptising in the wilderness, [*ἐν τῇ ἐρημῷ*]; why should it be thought sound criticism to determine that he put them under the water of Jordan, because it is said *ἐβαπτίζοντο ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ*.

No. X. Mark i. 5. "And they were all baptised in the river Jordan confessing their sins." Parallel to No. I.

No. XI. Mark i. 8. "I indeed baptise you with water, but he shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit." Parallel to No. II.

No. XII. Mark i. 9, 10. "And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptised of John in Jordan."

We of course read this, at or near to Jordan. See No. III.

[Remark however, that in many passages *εἰς*, the preposition here used is put for *ἐν*. See Matt. ii. 23. "He dwelt

in the city (*εις πολιν*) called Nazareth." Mar. ii. 1. John i. 18. Acts viii. 40, &c.]

No. XIII. Mark vii. 3, 4. "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from market, except they *wash* they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables." [couches.]

Here the word is rendered *wash*; and has reference to the ceremonial purifications of the Jews, many of which were performed by the sprinkling of water on him who was legally impure.—This passage has been before adduced to prove that baptise does not always mean immersion nor submersion, *dipping in* nor *dipping under*.

Nos. XIV. XV. Mark x. 38, 39. "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?" &c.—Parallel to Nos. VI. VII.

No. XVI. Mark xvi. 16. "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved," &c.

This has nothing to do with the mode of administering baptism; nor indeed with any point in dispute in the whole subject.

No. XVII. Luke iii. 7. "Then said he to the multitudes that came forth to be baptised by him, O generation of vipers! Who hath warned," &c.

This decides nothing.

No. XVIII. Luke iii. 12. "There came also publicans to be baptised, and said to him, master what shall we do?"

This also has nothing to do with the question.

No. XIX. Luke iii. 16. "I indeed baptise you *with water*; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptise you *with the Holy Spirit and with fire*." Parallel to No. II.

No. XX. Luke iii. 21. "Now when all the people were baptised, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptised," &c.

There is nothing here that bears on the subject.

Nos. XXI. XXII. Luke vii. 29, 30. "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans justified God, being baptised with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptised by him."

This can have no influence on the question *how* these persons were baptised.

No. XXIII. Luke xi. 38. "And when the Pharisee saw it he marvelled that he had *not first washed* (*ὄχι ἐβαπτίσεν*) before dinner."

Here we know that baptise does not signify to immerse or submerge.

No. XXIV. Luke xiii. 50. "But I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?" See Nos. VI. VII.

Nos. XXV. XXVI. XXVII. XXVIII. XXIX. John i. 25, 26, 28, 31, 33.—

"And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptisest thou, then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet—John answered them, saying, I baptise *with* water, but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not, &c. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptising—And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptising with water—And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost."

These passages either express or imply a comparison between the baptism of John, and that of the Messiah; and therefore are referred to No. II.

No. XXX. John iii. 22. "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them and baptised"

Nothing concerning the mode here.

No. XXXI. John iii. 2, 3. "And John was baptising in Enon, near to Salem, because there was much water there; and they came and were baptised."

On this passage, it is remarked, in the first place, that John had attracted great attention; that *great crowds* flocked to him for baptism; that the land of Judea is a hot and thirsty land; that in all climates, and especially in one so warm, multitudes of people with their cattle require a large supply of water *for drink*. At the *camp meetings* which are held in this country, where two or three thousand people assemble, attention to this circumstance is entirely necessary. Now, suppose that an advertisement published by some of our Methodist brethren should contain this,

among other statements, that there was at such a *camping ground* an abundance of water; and suppose that this *notice* should be preserved for some ages, and finally fall into the hands of a people practising baptism by immersion, and ignorant of the tenets of the Methodists—Why then, according to the mode of reasoning applied to this passage of scripture, it would at once be concluded that the people baptised by immersion: In other words, that the **METHODISTS** were **BAPTISTS**! Hence we see the fallacy of the reason which concludes, that John immersed those that came for baptism, because he selected a place where there was *much water*. This might have been done, for any thing that we know, for the accommodation of the crowd, that all might have enough to quench their thirst.

Again, all that we know about Enon amounts to very little. “It is near to Salim, eight miles south of Scythopolis.” By its name it imports to be a single spring; the fountain of On. This fountain flowed in *many streams* [*πολλα ὕδαλα*; the true rendering of the words used by the Evangelist; and not, *much water*, as in our translation.] This subject is well illustrated by a celebrated traveller.—“In 2 Kings, ii. 20, The elders of Jericho complained to Elisha, “the water is naught,” as it is in our translation; but the words are plural in the Hebrew; and the Greek rendering is plural also—[*τα ὕδατα πονηρα*, the streams are bad.] Now, what says matter of fact to this? *Maunderell* shall inform us. “Its waters are at present received in a basin, about nine or ten paces long, and five or six broad: and from thence issuing out in good plenty, divide themselves into *several small streams*, dispersing their refreshment to all the field, between this and Jericho, and rendering it exceedingly fruitful”—The fountain of On was probably, then, sufficiently copious to allow its waters to be divided into a number of small streams, (*πολλα ὕδατα*) which, running in different directions, afforded a

supply of water for the numbers which attended on John's administrations; and *with* the water of this fountain he baptised them—not *in* it, for then it would not have been used for drinking and cooking!

No. XXXII. John iii. 26. "And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptiseth, &c."

This decides nothing, and requires no remark.

Nos. XXXIII. XXXIV. John iv. 1, 2. "Jesus made and baptised more disciples than John—Jesus, however, did not baptise, but his disciples."

Nothing to the point before us.

No. XXXV. John x. 40. "Jesus went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John was baptising."

Same remark.

No. XXXVI. Acts i. 5. "For John truly baptised *with* water; but ye shall be baptised *with* the Holy Ghost not many days hence." See No II.

Nos. XXXVII. XXXVIII. Acts ii. 38, 41. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ—Then they that gladly received the word were baptised."

Nothing as to the mode.

Nos. XXXIX. XL. XLI. Acts viii. 12, 13, 16. "Those who believed Philip preaching, were baptised, both men and women—Simon also believed, and was baptised—Only they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Same remark.

Nos. XLII. XLIII. Acts viii. 36, 38, 39. "And as they went on the way they came to a certain water (*ἡ ἕδρα*, as vague and general an expression as language will admit) and the Eunuch said, behold! here is water; what hindereth that I should be baptised?—And he commanded the chariot to stop; and both Philip and the Eunuch went down into [*εἰς* to] the water, and he baptised him—And when they went up out of [*ἐκ* from] the water," &c.

This passage requires particular observation; and 1. We are utterly uncertain what water was intended, whether well, fountain streamlet, creek, or river: We only know that the country was called *desert*; and this warrants the belief that there was no great stream of water; perhaps a

streamlet, perhaps a spring. 2. But if this were not so; if there was a *river* in the desert of Judah, towards Gaza, which has escaped the notice of the geographers, then I would observe that the language of our translation does not require the belief that the Eunuch was immersed in water. For let it be considered that the feet and legs were generally naked in the ancient mode of dressing, except the soles of the feet which were protected by sandals, and that Philip and the Eunuch would have less difficulty in stepping into the water, than two gentlemen equipped in modern dress; that the Eunuch was travelling, and, for all that appears, he stopped on the road side; that the mode of immersion required a change of raiment, which from the delicacy of eastern men respecting the exposure of their persons, would have been extremely unpleasant to this Ethiopian lord; and one will hesitate exceedingly to decide that he was submerged by the Evangelist. 3. But what is the meaning of the two prepositions ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ and $\epsilon\nu$) translated *into* and *out of*? For the first, ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) I find that it has fifteen different meanings. These need not be specified. Among them are these, *to, unto, at*. For instance, Matt. xv. 24, "I was not sent save *to* ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. xxii. 4. "All things are ready; come ye *to* ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) the marriage." John xi. 31, "She goeth *to* ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) the sepulchre, that she may weep there." Verse 32, "Seeing him, she fell *at* ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) his feet." John xiii. 1, "Having loved his own, he loved them *to* ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) the end." Matt ii. 1. "Wise men came from the East *to* ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) Jerusalem." Verse 8, "And sending them *to* Bethlehem, he said," &c. Verse 12, "They returned *to* their own country." Mark xiii. 14, "Then let those in Judea, flee *to* the mountains." Matt. v. 1, "And seeing the multitude, he went up *to* a mountain; ($\alpha\nu\epsilon\beta\eta\ \epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \tau\acute{o}\ \acute{o}\rho\omicron\varsigma$, very similar to the phrase in the text $\kappa\alpha\tau\epsilon\beta\eta\sigma\alpha\nu\ \epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \tau\acute{o}\ \acute{\iota}\delta\omega\rho$.) Now, why not,

according to these numerous examples, render these words thus, *They went down to the water?* As for the preposition ($\epsilon\chi$) rendered *out of*, among its various significations, we frequently find *from*. Matt. xii. 42, "The queen of the south shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because she came *from* ($\epsilon\chi$) the uttermost part of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon," &c. Matt. xiii. 49. "And they (the angels) shall separate the wicked *from* ($\epsilon\chi$) the midst of the righteous." Matt. xvi. 1, "The Pharisees asked him to show them a sign *from* ($\epsilon\chi$) heaven." Matt. xviii. 9, "Until the son of man shall arise *from* ($\epsilon\chi$) the dead." And in many other passages. In perfect conformity with the usages of the Greek language then, we may render the passage, "*They went up from the water*, instead of, *they went up out of the water.*" Taking into view the whole train of circumstances, and the meaning of the Greek words, it seems to me that the natural and easy and fair interpretation of the passage is this:—Philip and the Eunuch went from the carriage down to the water; and baptism having been administered, they went up from the water, (probably a fountain near the road) to the carriage again. It must be assumed then that baptism was performed by immersion, before immersion can be found in the baptism of the Eunuch. But this is the point in controversy.

No. XLIV. Acts ix. 18. "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptised." [$\kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\sigma\theta\eta.$]

In this passage, the word taken in its connections, and the various circumstances, lead to the belief that Paul was baptised in a standing posture. Let any person who can read Greek, turn to Matt. xxvi. 62, and construe literally the words [$\kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\varsigma\ \acute{\omicron}\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\iota\epsilon\rho\epsilon\iota\varsigma,$ &c.] rendered in our translation, "And the high priest arose and said, What was the posture of the high priest, while speaking? See a similar phrase, Mark xiv. 69. Acts i. 15—v. 34, and in

various other passages. What is the posture of a man who (*ἀναστάς εὐφθῆ*) arose and was struck? What was the posture of Paul when he was baptised? Farther—Paul had been blind and was fasting for three days. In this exhausted and debilitated state, Ananias came in—Paul's sight was restored, and forthwith (*παραχρῆμα*, instantly, *dum res agitur*) he stood up and was baptised: after which he took food and was strengthened. All the circumstances here, as well as the express words of the text, are against the opinion that the apostle Paul was led away and immersed.—And I do not want more valid baptism than was administered to him, as he stood, doubtless by sprinkling or pouring.

Nos. XLV. XLVI. Acts x. 47, 48. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we—And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord."

These are Peter's words, and Peter's command, when he saw the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles. The manner of speech corresponds best with the manner of bringing water for the administration of baptism. If the persons to be baptised were to go to the water, it would be most natural to make *them* the *object* of the verb forbid; but if water was to be brought, then *that* would naturally be the object; as in the case here—"Can any man forbid water," &c. Does not the phraseology favour the mode of administration by sprinkling?

No. XLVII. Acts xi. 16. "John indeed baptised *with* water; but ye shall be baptised *with* the Holy Ghost."

Parallel to No. II.

No. XLVIII. Acts xvi. 15. "And when she [Lydia] was baptised with her household," &c.

This decides nothing.

No. XLIX. Acts xvi. 53. "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptised he and all his straightway."

The words here determine nothing concerning the mode of baptism; but the circumstances have considerable weight.

This baptism was performed in the night—in prison—and immediately [*παραχρημα*, forthwith, on the spot—] after the stripes of the apostle had been washed. Every circumstance furnishes a strong presumption against baptism by immersion, and in favour of sprinkling or pouring. It really seems to me utterly improbable, that the Jailor would have taken his prisoners out of prison, or that such a man as Paul would have gone out in the dead hour of the night. (See Verse 37.) On the contrary, it appears entirely probable that the Jailor and his family were baptised with some of the water brought to wash the stripes of the apostles.

Note.—The Jailor's house was a part of the prison.— Compare verses 26 and 34.

No. L. Acts xviii. 8. “And Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptised.”

This passage is nothing to our present purpose.

Nos. LI. LII. L'II. Acts. xix. 3, 4, 5. “And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptised? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Nothing here is determined as to the mode of baptising.

This passage has been before remarked on.

No. LIV. Acts xxii. 16. “And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

This refers to Paul's baptism before considered.—What did Paul do, when, as he lay on his bed, Ananias told him to arise [stand up] and be baptised? Did he not stand up and receive the holy sacrament? [*αναστας βαπτισαι* are the Greek words; and it deserves consideration, that according to the idiom of that language, these two words do not make two different commands, as the English reader would suppose, when he reads, 1, arise; 2, be baptised. But that the participle (*αναστας*) simply modifies the signification of the verb *βαπτισαι*, or rather is used to complete the action

of the verb; therefore, instead of warranting the opinion that Paul rose up, went out, and was immersed, it definitely and precisely expresses his posture when he received baptism, just as if Paul had been too weak to stand, and Ananias had said *ἀνακλίνας βαπτίσει*. lying down be baptised, it would have been evident that he received baptism in a recumbent posture.

No. LV Rom. vi. 5. "As many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death."

Would any person choose to render this passage, As many of us as were *immersed* into Jesus Christ, were *immersed* into his death? Is it not evident that the signification of the word here goes beyond the external rite, as it has been explained in the beginning of this Essay? But see remarks on the word *βαπτισμα*, baptism, No. LXXVII.

No. LVI. LVII. 1 Cor. i. 13, 14. "Were ye baptised in the name of Paul? I thank God I baptised none of you, save Crispus and Gaius."

No remark necessary.

Nos. LVIII. LIX. LX. 1 Cor. i. 15, 16, 17. "Lest any should say that I had baptised in my own name—And I baptised also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptised any other."

We have nothing to say here.

No. LXI. 1 Cor. x. 2. "They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

Baptism in a cloud must be by sprinkling; for that is the natural action of the cloud: and certainly the Israelites were not immersed in the cloud. Baptism in the sea, (that is the Red Sea,) could not have been by immersion, because by miracle the waters were removed, and the people went over on *dry land*. The only baptism by means of the sea must have been from its spray, that is by sprinkling.

No. LXII. 1 Cor. xii. 13. "By one Spirit we are all baptised into one body."

This proves nothing as to the mode; but it shows that differences as to this matter ought not to break the unity of the church, or prevent the communion of members of the same body.

No. LXIII. 1 Cor. xv. 29. "Else what shall they do, who are baptised for the dead?"

No remark.

No. LXIV. Gal. iii. 27. "As many of you as were baptised into Christ, have put on Christ."

Here is no proof for or against immersion.

The words βαπτισμα and βαπτισμος, baptism, occur in the following passages.

No. LXV. Matt. iii. 7. "Seeing many of the scribes and Pharisees coming to his baptism," &c.

No remark.

Nos. LXVI. LXVII. Matt. xx. 22, 23. Before quoted. See Nos. VI. and VII.

No. LVIII. Matt. xxi. 25. "The baptism of John whence was it," &c.

No remark.

No. LXIX. Mark i. 4. "John was baptising in the wilderness, and preaching the baptism of repentance."

Determines nothing.

Nos. LXX. LXXI. Mark vii. 4, 8. "And many other things which they have received to hold, as the washings (baptisms) of pots, of cups, of brazen vessels, and tables.—And again, washings (baptisms) of pots and cups."

Here the word means washing, and that in an indeterminate manner. Certainly, however, not by immersion in the case of tables or couches.

Nos. LXXII. LXXIII. Mark x. 38, 39. These passages are precisely parallel to LXVI. LXVII, and need not be quoted.

No. LXXIV. Mark xi. 30. Parallel to LXVIII.

No. LXXV. Luke iii. 3. "Preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

No remark.

No. LXXVI. Luke xii. 29. "Being baptised with the baptism of John."

No remark.

No. LXXVII. Luke xii. 50. "I have a baptism to be baptised with and how am I straitened," &c.

No remark.

No. LXXVIII. Luke xx. 4. See No. LXVIII.

No. LXXIX. Acts i. 22. "Begining from the baptism of John."

No remark.

No. LXXX. Acts x. 37. "After the baptism which John preached."

No remark.

No. LXXXI. Acts xiii. 24. "John preached, before his coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people."

No remark.

No. LXXXII. Acts xviii. 25. "Knowing only the baptism of John."

No remark.

Nos. LXXXIII, LXXXIV. Acts xix. 3, 4. "And he said unto them unto what then were ye baptised? And they said, unto John's baptism, And Paul said, John indeed baptised the baptism of repentance," &c.

Let us try how the word immersion will do here.—Into what were ye immersed? Into John's immersion—John immersed the immersion of repentance.—What strange and harsh language is this? Note, there is no Greek word answering to the *with*, before baptism in Paul's remark, as it is in the common version.

No. LXXXV. Rom. vi. 4. "Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, that as Christ was raised from the dead, even we also should walk in newness of life."

See No. LXXXVII.

No. LXXXVI. Eph. iv. 5. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

This determines nothing.

No. LXXXVII. Col. ii. 11, 12. "In whom ye also 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, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

This passage and the one referred to it above, are supposed strongly to favour the mode of immersion; because there is an allusion to the burial of Christ; and to bear out this allusion, it is thought that there should be a resemblance between the administration of baptism, and the manner of burying. Let us take nothing on trust, but examine for ourselves. I remark,

1. The manner of burial among ourselves, by letting a corpse down into the grave, may perhaps influence the judgment of many in this case. But the interment of our Lord's body was different. There are at this time, and

probably will be to the end of the world, many ancient tombs in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, which sufficiently show the manner of burial formerly practised.* Chambers are excavated in the solid rock; and in the side walls of these Chambers, niches of proper length and breadth are formed for the reception of dead bodies. After the death of our Saviour, his body was wrapped in clean linen, and deposited in one of these niches. Now, what analogy exists between such a burial as this, and the sudden immersion of the body in water? What, between a corpse lying three days in a niche in a chamber hewn out in a rock, and a living body plunged for a moment in a stream of water? Really the resemblance is so remote, that I cannot persuade myself that the apostle had it in view. Did he not rather allude to the washing of the body which was *always* a part of the funeral ceremony?

2. The language here is figurative; by all rules of interpretation then the figure ought to be kept up; that is one part ought not to be made literal, and the other figurative. If we must be literally immersed in water, why not *unto* death? But this would be an adherence to a doubtful interpretation not to be expected. Suppose, however, the passage should be translated as some would have it, “We are buried with him by immersion into death”—what then does it mean? Immersion into death! Buried with Christ, by immersion into death! I cannot understand it.

3. The apostle addressed this letter to the adult members of the church, who as the church was recently organized, of course were received on a profession of their faith. In the word baptism, as seems to me, he included the instruction received by the members of the church, and consequently all the spiritual truth signified by the term. [See our explanation of its meaning part I.] Baptism into the

* Note—This explains the account of the demoniacs mentioned, Matt viii. 28. Mark v. 8. Luke viii. 27, Who came out of the tombs, &c.

death of Christ then means being brought into a relation or situation, in which the baptised person shall be fully instructed in the design of Christ's death, the obligations to holy living resulting from it, and the sanctification which the Holy Spirit (the purchase of the death of Christ) produces. And as the washing, which it has been said always made a part of the burial service of the ancients, signified that they were no more to have communication with the world and be contaminated by it, so when christians were baptised they were considered as separated from the world, as though they were buried. They might therefore very well, in this figurative way, be said to be buried with him by baptism, be the mode of baptism what it might. And this seems to me a much more easy and natural interpretation than the hard-strained analogy between immersion, and, as was before said, the laying of Christ's body in a niche in a wall. The text in Colossians fully proves that the apostle has in view the spiritual signification of baptism; for in connection with the burial by baptism he mentions being "raised by faith which is the operation of the spirit of God." Now if *buried by baptism* here means immersed, put down into the water; *then raised by faith*, must mean raised, lifted up out of the water. But this is an effect not commonly ascribed to faith. *This raising* is partly the operation of the administrator, and partly, of the subject of baptism. Clearly the apostle intends here to speak of the spiritual meaning of baptism.

It may be remarked in passing, that although the text in Colossians, affords no proof that baptism was administered by immersion, it decidedly proves that circumcision has given way to baptism—for Paul expressly calls it the circumcision of Christ, that is as we would now express it, Christian circumcision.

Once more, we would observe that in Rom. vi. 5, the apostle continuing his discourse in reference to the same truths, says, "For if we have been planted together in the

likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Paul here has the same subject before him, viz baptism; and here he uses a new figure, that of planting. What is done or what can be done if this is interpreted literally, to keep up the analogy I know not. It is said that we are buried, when immersed; what is done that we may be planted? Really I wish to know; for I feel just as much obligation to be *planted*, as I do to be *buried*. This shows the impropriety of straining figures of speech beyond what they can well bear.

No. LXXXVIII. Heb. vi. 2. "The doctrine of baptisms," &c.

No remark.

No. LXXXIX. Heb. ix. 10. "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings (*βαπτισμῶς*, baptisms,)" &c.

Here is a clear reference to Jewish observances; the washings and sprinklings so common among the Jews are termed *baptisms*. How then can it be affirmed that baptism always signifies immersion?

No. XC. 1 Pet. iii. 21. "The like figure whereunto, even baptism doth now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh,) but the answer of a good conscience toward God."

For the interpretation of this passage, see page 7, of this Essay. I shall only add here that they who were saved by water at the time of the deluge, were not immersed in it, but floated on it by aid of the ark. If the deluge is in this respect like baptism, then there is no immersion, for they that were *immersed* were drowned.

Unnecessary trouble has perhaps been taken; but it was wished to do full justice to the subject. Every passage has been noticed in which the word baptise or baptism occurs in the New Testament. The number is just ninety; of these sixty-five are wholly indeterminate; sixteen on the whole favour the mode by sprinkling or affusion; two or three of these seem to make it morally certain that the ordinance was thus administered: and of the remaining nine passages, not one of them, nor all together, however they

may have been relied on, prove that baptism was administered by immersion. The conclusion then is, *that God has not prescribed any particular mode according to which this sacrament is to be administered; and that they who would limit the practice of the church to one specific manner, decide what God has left undetermined.*

While this is my full and firm conviction, I hold that *one mode of baptism is preferable to another*, and shall proceed to show the grounds of my belief, that sprinkling or pouring is to be preferred.

1. This mode seems to me best adapted to the universality of Christ's religion. It is certain, that in remote northern regions, the rite cannot be administered by immersion without much inconvenience during the greater part of the year; it is equally certain, that in torrid regions, where water can be scarcely obtained for drink, it would be as inconvenient; and there are cases, suppose of a person in the last stage of consumption, earnestly desirous to be baptised, and giving good evidence of sincere belief, wherein immersion might be highly improper. In this case, the minister might tell the person, that the desire would be accepted, and that salvation does not depend on baptism, &c. But suppose that he should say, I feel it to be a duty, and my conscience cannot be easy without complying with it.—Now I ask, is the law of Christ's church such, that no relief can be afforded to this scrupulous conscience? I think not. But in the next place, and this brings me to my last proposition,

I observe that the great matter represented by baptism, namely the communication of the Holy Spirit in his purifying influences, is expressed by the words sprinkling, pouring, and the like. As for example

Matt: iii. 11. "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost:"—Luke xxiv. 49. "Ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Now, this was a proper real baptism, and was visible to the senses—but see

what Peter says on this subject. Acts ii. 16, 17, "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) I will **POUR OUT** of my spirit on all flesh," &c. What more express and decisive evidence can be given that baptism is administered by pouring? Again. Acts x. 45. "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles was **POURED OUT** the gift of the Holy Ghost." Here was a beginning of the fulfilment of that prophecy recorded in Isai lii. 15. "So shall he *sprinkle* many nations." It is obvious to remark, that the baptism performed by *pouring*, could not be performed by *immersion*. And universally, the communication of that which is represented by baptism, is expressed in scripture by words which import descending—Such as the pouring out of the Spirit—the shedding forth of the Spirit. Now, as the baptism of the Holy Spirit was conferred by the *descending* of the baptismal element, it is clear that there is a much greater analogy between the *sign* and the thing *signified*, when the water is made to descend upon the subject of baptism, than when he is *put down* into the water.

"That there was a resemblance between baptism by water and baptism by the Holy Spirit, is manifest from Acts x. 47: "for the apostle Peter seeing the Holy Spirit *poured out* on the company at Cornelius's, immediately recollected an allusion to John's baptism by water. The Lord said, 'John *baptised* with water, but you shall be *baptised* with the Holy Ghost.'" If there were no resemblance between the two baptisms, how came the apostle's memory to be refreshed by what he saw? How came he to lay a stress on his recollection, thus raised to exercise? And this made so strong an impression on his mind, that he adverts to it a long while afterwards, (Acts xv. 8.) Why so, unless the fact were striking. And if it be asked, what did he see? I answer,—he saw the *pouring down* of the

Holy Ghost; for this is the term expressly used in the history.”

Let us now suppose, first, that baptism is synonymous with immersion; and secondly, with pouring, and let us substitute the synonymous in place of the original terms.

1. John *immerses* you in *water*; but you shall be *immersed* in the *Holy Spirit*. [Note—This is contrary to the fact, for the Holy Spirit was poured on them.]

2. John pours *water* on you; but the Holy Ghost shall be poured on you not many days hence.

Here is the resemblance; and it may not be at all surprising, that when Peter saw the Holy Spirit *poured* out on the Gentiles, that he should be reminded of John's baptism. With this remark may be compared, what is said concerning the children of Israel being baptised unto Moses in the cloud. And also, the declaration in Daniel, (Septuagint Version,) that Nebuchadnezzar should be *baptised* with the *dew* of heaven. Dan. iv. 23, 25, 33. v. 21. Here is manifestly *descent* of water, in what is called baptising. For, when water comes on one from a cloud, it *descends*—when vapour is condensed, it *descends* in the form of dew, and is the gentlest manner of *sprinkling*.

These remarks might be extended much farther. But it is enough.

It has been shown,

1. That the words baptism and baptise, in their scriptural signification, include, not only an external rite, but the idea of teaching, instruction, discipline, together with the effect produced by that discipline.

2. That, according to the nature of the covenant, and agreeably to the ascertained practice of the apostles, believing parents and their children ought to be baptised.

3. That dipping persons in water is not necessary; but that baptism is duly administered by pouring or sprinkling.

In undertaking this work, my sole object, if I know my own heart, has been to promote what I conscientiously

believe to be the truth. And I trust that I have not forgotten that those who differ from me on this subject are brethren. While I acknowledge that “*they hold the Head;*” that their piety, their zeal, and activity in promoting religion, are to be commended, I do believe that they are in an error as to the subject of baptism; and that this error is injurious. I have therefore felt it to be a duty to give my views of scripture doctrine on the subject. Many topics have been touched very superficially, and many not at all. In studying to be brief I hope that I have not been obscure.

Should any one here be disposed to ask, what profit is there in baptism? I answer as Paul answered a similar question respecting circumcision—Much every way. As the oracles of God were committed to the Jews, and the pious in the world were generally found among the seed of Abraham, so it is now. Religion in a very remarkable way runs in families. There are multitudes in the present day, who like Timothy, have known the scriptures from their youth, and exercise that faith which was in their mothers and grandmothers. In fact the baptising of the children of believers seems to be a most important means of ensuring their being trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; of their being taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. Baptism being the seal of the righteousness of faith, or of God’s righteousness as elsewhere it is termed, when applied to young members of the visible church, gives assurance that the means of discipline when faithfully used according to God’s appointment shall not be employed in vain. This affords much encouragement to parents in the arduous work of training their children in the way in which they should go.

And while these happy effects are to be expected from the due observance of Christ’s ordinance, the doctrine which has been exhibited, seems to me to afford the only solid comfort to a parent anxiously enquiring, What will become of my children, when my head shall be laid in the

grave? God's covenant engagement comes in then for his support, and he rejoices in hope, while he reads the promise, "*I will be a God to thee and to thy seed.*" **FOR BEING CHRIST'S, HE IS A CHILD OF ABRAHAM, AND AN HEIR ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE.**

FINIS.