

mised to be "a God" to Abraham, and "to his seed after" him—that blessing was a spiritual blessing, extending, under the outward emblem "circumcision," to that of "the foreskin of the heart"—the promise was "sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham;"* he hears of a "circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ," which is the "being buried with him in baptism:" Christ has instituted a new sacrament of baptism, and has enjoined his disciples to go and teach all nations, and baptize them; if all nations had been proselyted to Judaism, they must have been baptized at least; he is accustomed to this baptism by the ordinary mode of receiving proselytes; he is still more familiarized with it, having been a partaker of John's baptism: shall not his faith then apply the new sacrament of baptism to his child in the place of circumcision, and thus the child be outwardly acknowledged by the Church as an heir of grace, as well as virtually be such by the covenant of promise? In circumcision his child would have received his covenant name, as the Jewish child did;† at baptism he receives the same—in the former the child receives the seal of the promise; in the latter it receives the same—in the former it is accepted into Church-membership; in the latter it finds the same acceptance—in the former the faith of the Church has enrolled the child in the number of the faithful; in the latter the same faith has admitted the child to the same blessed privilege,—in the former he is educated on the promise as a child of faithful Abraham; in the latter he is educated in faith of the same promise, and of additional and confirmatory promises, as "a member of Christ, the child of God, and the inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

And if baptism be not the successor of Circumcision, what is the designation of his child? (He is not a Jew, he is not a Gentile, he is not a Christian; he is nothing "outwardly;" he nominally belongs to no church, no "household of God;" for without the pledge of Church-membership, which the initiatory sacraments of either dispensation confessedly are, no visible church acknowledges him; he is consequently without church character, without designation and name.

Let Christian parents, then, place themselves just in the position of the converted Jew, at the first establishment of the Gospel, with all his previous knowledge, preparatory habits, and introductory education, for the substitution of water for blood as the emblem, and baptism for circumcision as the Sacrament; and let them add to this the sweet and blessed character of the Gospel, full of encouragement, and invitation, and promise, demanding faith and discouraging doubt, and hesitation and distance—and will they not see, that the transition from circumcision to baptism is natural and easy, and that baptism is just the very privilege which the church, so richly redeemed, might expect from the kindness and condescension of her covenant God?

I must confess, so deeply impressed is my mind with this view of baptism,—and I would speak it with the utmost lowliness that dust and ashes should assume when speaking of the gracious dispensations of Almighty wisdom and love—that had I been a Jew converted to Christianity at that early time, with all my previous associations and prepossessions, on comparing the two dispensations together, I should have been disposed to have complained, that the archetype did not answer to its type, nor the building correspond with the scaffolding, had baptism been wanting in the new dispensation, as the pledge of covenant mercies to the children of the faithful: and I must yet go further, and say, that if this view be correct, so prepared was the mind of the Church for this substitution of one sacrament for the other, as the initiatory pledge of covenant blessings to the children, as to render the explicit mention of baptizing children, in the final commission to teach and baptize all nations, wholly superfluous; that in the then prepared state of the Christian mind for this application of the ordinance to children, it would have been as unnecessary to say, "administer this baptism to infants," as at the institution of the other sacrament it would have been an unnecessary announcement to have said, "do not you only receive this in remembrance of me, but let your women receive it also." Nor does it appear to me, that the gen-

eral custom of the Church for centuries thus to apply the promise of mercy to infants, would ever have been either interrupted or questioned, had not declining doctrine and declining practice found it necessary to contradict the doctrine, or counteract the practice of infant baptism in earlier times; or a too hasty attempt to prevent the mischiefs arising from the abuse of the practise in the general laxity of a mere Christian profession; having induced some in these latter times, to innovate rather than to reform, and to abolish the privilege rather than to correct the scandal of an undue administration of it.—*Luce.*

[From the Churchman.]

Mr. Editor,

An excellent volume has just made its appearance from the able pen of the Rev. Michael Russel, LL. D. It contains discourses on the *Millenium*, and the *doctrine of Election*, *Justification by Faith*; and on the *historical evidence for the Apostolic Institution of Episcopacy*; and in the opinion of your correspondent, is worthy of the attentive perusal of every Churchman. The following is an extract from the discourse on *Justification by Faith*. By giving it a place in your paper, should it meet your views, you will oblige your friend

"Another evil arising from the practice of applying to Christians in modern times expressions which were suggested by the peculiar situation of the original members of the Church, appears in the aversion entertained by a large class of our countrymen to the sound Scriptural doctrine which attaches conditions to salvation.

"Such persons repeat in our ears, even to satiety, that we are justified freely—that we are saved by grace, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. Now, in reply to such arguments, let it be stated once more, that the meritorious cause of salvation is unquestionably the death of CHRIST, and that so far it is a free gift—the gift of God, which no human being could either merit or purchase. But one apostle tells us, that we are saved by faith; while another assures us, that if faith be not accompanied by works, it is useless—it is dead, being alone: hence divines have been in the habit of saying that the atonement made by the REDEEMER is the efficient cause of human salvation, and that faith and obedience are the conditions upon which it is granted to individuals.

"Certain squeamish preachers, however, began their opposition to this plain doctrine by taking offence at works, that is, a man's words and actions, being held even as a condition of salvation; and the only religious value they allowed to holiness, temperance, brotherly kindness, and charity, was confined to the fact that such graces afford evidence of the existence of faith. According to this hypothesis, faith was made the sole condition upon which the MIGHTY GOD extends to individuals the benefits of the Christian mediation; namely, the pardon of sin, and the blessing of eternal life. But this refinement is not now deemed sufficient. It has been discovered, that if even faith be held as a condition of entrance on the Gospel is not completely gratuitous; for if faith must be presented unto God when we ask to be saved, we are making a bargain for heaven, as much as we should do were we to offer our good works, our prayers, and our aims, as the purchase money for the foot of the Eternal. According to the most modern system therefore, all conditions are discarded; faith and good works are equally thrown into the back ground; and all that is required of man, as the recipient of salvation, is a hearty belief that the gift has been already bestowed. We are told by one writer, that "God neither loves nor pardons us on account of our belief in his testimony: but the belief of his love, and of the gift which his love has bestowed, will give a confidence that we are dear welcome to him—that we are his accepted ones—his adopted children. Pardon exists before the faith, and only becomes personal feeling in consequence of being believed. And what we do not know this, or are insensible to it, we are not justified.

"As far as any meaning can be drawn from such a statement we are to conclude that a man is to judge of his spiritual condition, not by any correspondence between his character and the rules of God's law, but by the ardor of his feelings, the intensity of his affections, and the firmness of his assurance. This is a re-

* Rom. iv, 16.

† Luke i, 59, and ii, 21.