

spiritual paternity; and may they not have shared the common salvation in the same manner? If the Abrahamic covenant made no provision but for believers; it must be evident to every person, that it is not sufficient to save the dying infant; and we may reasonably ask those who hold such an opinion, why God strictly enjoined the parent to place the seal of the covenant upon his infant child, and connected the neglect thereof, with a terrible penalty? An essential element in that covenant was, that God promised to be "a God to Abraham and to his seed after him." If it ran thus, "I will be a God to thee, and to all those who like thee exercise faith in me;" then, there might be a warrant for handing over all children to the uncovenanted mercies of God. So far from there being anything in the promise that precludes God from being the God of the dying infant, there is in it the pledge of God to the contrary. The covenant is to be regarded in the light of a federal engagement between God on the one side; and Abraham and his seed, on the other side; and we maintain that the infant, dying in infancy, included in that federal engagement is saved: "for he is faithful who hath promised."

But says some one, "females were not circumcised." Certainly not; for the reason that the seal was inapplicable to them. But their exemption did not involve the forfeiture of any of the blessings of the covenant of which circumcision was a token. It cannot have escaped the notice of those who read their Bibles, that females were, for the most part, entitled to the same privileges with their husbands and fathers. But asks the objector, "could they enjoy such interest without personally submitting to the ordinance, with which the privileges were connected?" I answer, yes. Because in the first place, they did not submit to the ordinance; and secondly; it is beyond doubt that they had an interest in covenant blessings. To deny this would be to weaken the force of Paul's argument respecting the great profit of circumcision to the Jewish people, at large: including both males and females. He says there "was much profit in circumcision, viewing Israel as a nation. The nation included females, who enjoyed nearly every spiritual privilege equally with the males; though, as already observed, circumcision was inapplicable to them."

None will question the right of the author of Christianity to modify any system which he has given to his Church. This he has done,—changing the seals of

the covenant, in order to make them applicable to the enlarged state of the Church. The Passover, which could not be observed by the Church as now constituted, has been abolished, and the Lord's supper instituted, in its stead; which can be observed by the Church everywhere. In like manner, circumcision, which was limited to the male children, has been set aside, and baptism has been instituted in its stead, which is applicable to both males and females, in all ages, conditions, and climes.

II. The seal of the covenant is to be administered but once.

Under the first dispensation circumcision was administered to a person but once. By it the individual was recognized as a child of God. So under the present dispensation, baptism is to be administered but once. The person is then recognized as a member of the visible Church, belonging to Christ's flock and separate from the world. There is not, a case on record, where a person having received Christian baptism, was re-baptized by the Apostles; and those who, through ignorance of the nature of baptism, are re-baptized in the present day, act contrary to the teaching of God's word, and the practice of the Apostles. Whoever has been baptized "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," has baptism, so far as it can be conveyed by man; and it matters not at what period of life, the rite has been administered, it is substantial baptism. It is an act of consecration to the Deity; and there should be no repetition of it. There "is one Lord, one faith, one baptism," *EPH. IV. 5.* It is lamentable to find those, who had been consecrated to God in infancy, by Godly parents who are now in heaven—who were baptized by holy ministers whose labors God owned and crowned with success, drawn away from their steadfastness by the perdition of truth, and re-baptized. Where can they find a warrant for such a step? "It is better to obey God than man."

Such persons attempt to justify the act by saying, "it is the *mode* they deem essential." Just so. Now if *mode* were essential, is it not strange that our Lord in giving the commission to his disciples, says nothing respecting the *mode*; and never uses the word *water*—much less the quantity. The practice of re-baptizing is condemned by the most eminent divines; is contrary to the practice of the Church in its purest period; is contrary to the practice of the Apostles; and calculated to bring the ordinance itself into