

will render it plausible. We do not hesitate to declare, that, if the practice of Christian baptism in its essentials, cannot be sufficiently determined by the Bible alone, it had better be entirely discontinued. It would be better to acquiesce in regarding, with the Quakers, the baptism of water as a ceremony become impracticable, than to attempt making up for a Scriptural uncertainty by the traditions of the Fathers, and thus add to the Bible. Although we do not quote from the Fathers in favour of infant baptism, yet their testimony is entirely in favour of it. Such also is the opinion of the most competent judge of historical evidence on baptism,—WALL, who has been surnamed “the historian of baptism,” having collected impartially in two volumes all the extracts which make the most distant allusion to baptism, declares that the result is entirely in favour of infant baptism. Unfortunately, great vagueness prevails as to the religious value of baptism, and it is under the cover of this misty vagueness that a great variety of opinions have arisen, which testify to the general uncertainty on this subject. The want of careful discrimination in some passages between the baptism of water and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, opens a wide range for attributing to the rite various degrees of mysterious efficacy short of baptismal regeneration, although this latter is the only true result of the confusion of the two baptisms. This vagueness and uncertainty offends many Evangelical Christians, and carries them over to Anabaptism, where they imagine they shall find perspicuity, precision, and the absence of all sacramental mysticism. But disappointment awaits them. They will find that the system rests on the outward form, but that the spiritual idea of baptism is as vague and indefinite there as elsewhere. Some of them recognise in baptism only an external mark of admission into the Church; others see in baptism a spiritual conformity to the death of Christ; others, a burial, literal, real, and material; others, a special grace conferred; others, a simple act of obedience, without the communication of any special grace; others, baptismal regeneration; and all attach to it an excessive importance, which raises the baptism of water to the level of fundamental doctrines. We have mentioned Anabaptists as