

sequent want of uniformity in the practice of those who espouse it. For instance, one portion tell us, that because male infants were circumcised among the Jews under the law, therefore all the infants of believers are to be baptized under the gospel; assigning as a reason for extending it to females, that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, *as if this had not always been a truth*, for it will not surely be contended that there were no female believers in Christ till he became incarnate. We believe there were many such, and cheerfully number them with those of whom God has said, "Gather my saints together, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."* A second part literally baptize whole nations, irrespective of age, sex, or character, and thus invert the order of the gospel, and tacitly proclaim, in opposition to Paul, that Christ sent them not to preach the gospel, but to baptize. A third section ground their practice on the possibility of there having been infants in the households baptized by the apostles; but is not the probability much greater, that there were slaves or domestics in such households? and then, upon any other system than that of the baptist, it follows, that these were unbelievers, and as such must have been baptized. Thus am I told by one that all children are entitled to the ordinance; whilst another says, no; it is to be administered only to the infant offspring of believers. I ask, what is to be understood by the term believer? and here again a difference arises, for one says that the parent or parents must be *bona fide* a member or members of a Christian church; whilst another considers a mere attendance on the preaching of the gospel, and the faith implied by the presentation of a child, as constituting a faith *sufficient for this purpose*. Moreover, it is said that they are already in the covenant of grace by virtue of their connexion with their parents; and again, it is no less confidently asserted, that it is by the ordinance in question that they are introduced into the covenant, and made members of the visible kingdom of Christ; so that an interest in that covenant which is "well ordered in all things and sure" is made to depend on birth, or a mere outward ceremony. Anon, when these same persons ascend the pulpit, and there define the character of a disciple of Jesus, and point out the qualifications and duties of church members, all this fanciful fabric, reared with so much apparent ingenuity, is instantly demolished; for the little disciples are entirely lost sight of, and they then declare with their baptist brethren that we become "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Nor is a contrariety of opinion confined to the subjects, seeing a

large majority concur with the Baptists as to the mode, and inveigh against the introduction of sprinkling, as an innovation much to be deplored. Whereas, if you ask a Dutch or an English, a Scotch or an Irish, an Indian or an American baptist, who ought to be baptized, and in what manner is it to be done, they with one voice unanimously declare, believers only are proper subjects, and immersion is the mode; no difference of opinion is found to exist among them, and the reason is doubtless resolvable into a close adherence to the commission of Christ, and its exemplification in the Acts of the Apostles. Here, then, let them make a firm stand,—here let them concentrate all their forces; they occupy high ground, from whence they can view the diversified and combined armies below, and from this impregnable fortress may they continue to repel their united assaults, for, clothed in this divine panoply, and armed with these weapons of heavenly temper, "one shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight." Whilst, on the contrary, the abettors of infant baptism are perpetually shifting their ground, now sallying forth from this point, and then from that; now defending this tottering rampart, and then that; by which it is abundantly manifest, that "their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges." There is no knowing, it is true, what "strong reasons" may yet be brought forth; but if we may judge of what is to be from what has been, our opponents may continue to lucubrate, and announce hypothesis after hypothesis, we still reply—

"Our steady souls shall fear no more
Than solid rocks when billows roar"—

and ask, by what authority do ye this thing, and who gave you this authority? for proof, irrefragable proof, has been adduced again and again, that "from the beginning it was not so."

But, in refusing to baptize their children, the Baptists are charged with withholding from them an inestimable privilege, equivalent to a want of concern for their future welfare. Something like this I have lately met with, and being myself a parent, I confess it has touched me in a very tender part. But I would ask, what does the pædobaptist for his children, in conformity with the will of God, that the baptist does not? Does he pray that the souls of his children may be precious in the sight of his heavenly Father—that he would pour out his Spirit upon his seed, and his blessing upon his offspring?—does he say, "O that Ishmael might live before God?" so does his brother. Does the former expatiate on the compassion of Him who has said, "I love them that love me,

* See Nehemiah. x. 28.