

THE WESLEYAN.

For the Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, &c.

"HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS."—SCRIPTURE.

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Original Poetry.

STANZAS.

THE sun of faith appears in sight,
And high in heaven, tho' dimly, glows:
And holy light,
From glory's height
Beyond its gladdening orbit, throws
A day upon the realms of night,
That never more shall close.

O, I am saved by wondrous might!
The murky rill translucent flows:
The Ethiope white,
In loftiest flight
And energy, finds vast repose:
Glory to God—eternal blight
Shrinks from the leaves of Sharon's Rose:

Glory to God on high! the fight
He won, who now the crown bestows—
Jesus! how bright
A name to write!
Jesus hath vanquish'd all my foes:
Glory to God on high! delight
Streams in the channel of my woes!

A. J. WILLIAMSON.

Exeter, Oct. 31st.

Theological.

THE NATURE, SUBJECTS, AND MODE OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

(Continued from page 343.)

"How idle a thing is it, in a Baptist, to come with a lexicon in his hand to inform us that children means posterity! Certainly it does, and so includes the youngest infants.

"But the Baptists will have it that children, in this place, means only *adult posterity*. And if so, the Jews to whom he spoke, unless they understood St. Peter in a way in which it was morally impossible they should, would infallibly have understood him wrong. Certainly, all men, when acting freely, will understand words in that way which is most familiar to them; and nothing could be more so to the Jews than to understand such a speech as St. Peter's to mean adults and infants.

"We should more certainly come to the truth, if, instead of idly criticising, we could fancy ourselves Jews, and in the habit of circumcising infants, and receiving them into the church; and then could we imagine one of our own nation and religion to address us in the very language of Peter in the text, 'The promise is to you and to your children;' let us ask ourselves whether we could ever suppose him to

mean adult posterity only!" (*Edwards on Baptism.*)

To this we may add that St. Paul calls the children of believers *holy*, separated to God, and standing therefore in a peculiar relation to him, 1 Cor. vii. 14; a mode of speech which would also have been wholly unintelligible, at least to a Jew, unless by some rite of Christianity children were made sharers in its covenanted mercies.

The practice of the Jews, and the very language of the Apostles, so naturally leading therefore to a misunderstanding of this sacrament, if infant baptism be not a Christian rite, and that in respect of its subjects themselves, it was the more necessary that some notice of the exclusion of infants from the Christian covenant should have been given by way of guard. And, as we find no intimation of this prohibitory kind, we may confidently conclude that it was never the design of Christ to restrict this ordinance to adults only.

3. Infant children are declared by Christ to be members of his church.

That they were made members of God's church in the family of Abraham, and among the Jews, cannot be denied. They were made so by circumcision, which was not that carnal and merely political rite which many Baptist writers in contradiction to the Scriptures make it, but was, as we have seen, the seal of a spiritual covenant, comprehending engagements to bestow the remission of sins and all its consequent blessings in this life, and, in another, the heavenly Canaan. Among these blessings was that special relation which consisted in becoming a visible and peculiar people of God, his church. This was contained in the engagement of the covenant, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people;" a promise which, however connected with temporal advantages, was, in its highest and most emphatic sense, wholly spiritual. Circumcision was, therefore, a *religious* and not a mere political rite, because the covenant, of which it was the seal, was in its most ample sense spiritual. If therefore we had no direct authority from the words of Christ to declare the infant children of believers *competent* to become the members of his church, the two circumstances,—that the church of God, which has always been one church in all ages, and into which the Gentiles are now introduced, formerly admitted infants to membership by circumcision,—and that the *mode* of initiation into it only has been changed, and not the *subjects*, (of which we have no intimation,) would themselves prove that baptism admits into the Christian