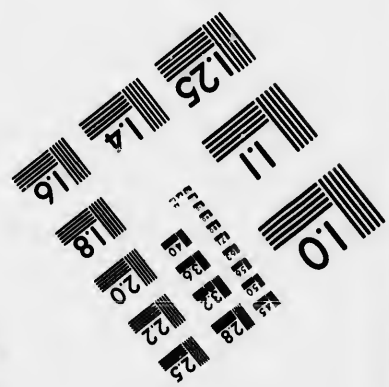
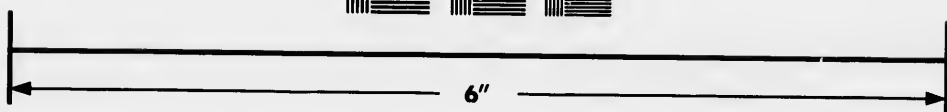
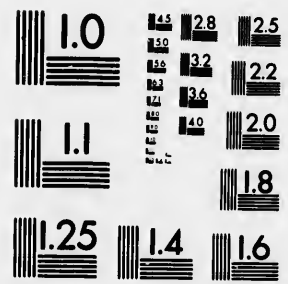


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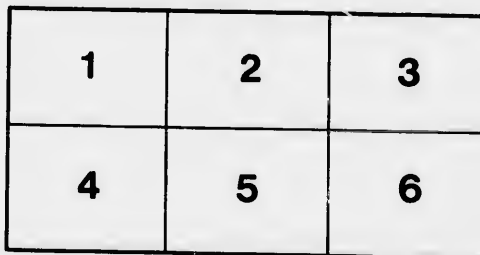
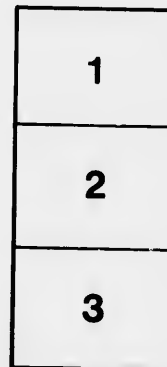
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INFANT SPRINKLING,

Weighed

IN THE BALANCE OF THE SANCTUARY,
AND FOUND WANTING,

In Five Letters,

ADDRESSED

To the Rev. George Jackson,

WESLEYAN METHODIST MISSIONARY;

BEING A REPLY TO HIS LETTERS

IN DEFENCE

Infant Sprinkling.

BY WILLIAM ELDER.

When they believed *Paul* preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him,

If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.

HALIFAX:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1828.

PREFACE.

TO THE READER.

THE subjects which the following letters embrace, are of considerable importance, as they contain the faith and practice of every professed disciple of Jesus Christ. Our Lord, previous to his ascension to glory, gave commandment to his disciples to teach, disciple, or convert all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; declaring that he who believed and was baptized, should be saved. It is an inquiry of great importance to every individual, Am I partaker of that precious faith, to which the promise of salvation is made? If so, have I obeyed my Lord's command in being baptized?—It is contended for by many, that infants ought to be baptized, and that sprinkling is baptism; consequently that no person who has been sprinkled in infancy, ought to be baptized, or immersed, on being made partaker of the hope of eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. This opinion however is opposed by a considerable body of Christians, among whom is the writer of these letters.—We conceive that the New Testament connects faith and repentance with baptism, consequently that baptism should never be administered without a credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus.—We also believe that immersion, and that alone is baptism.

There have been within a few years two publications in this Province in favour of infant sprinkling; one by the Rev. James Munroe, the other lately by the Rev. George Jackson, to which this professes to be a reply. We are of opinion that the Scripture is the standard of faith and practice, and would be willing to rest our cause on that alone, were our opponents so disposed; but when an appeal is made to the public, in favour of infant sprinkling, and other sources of argument resorted to, we think it a duty publicly to state our reasons for opposing infant sprinkling. The reader is requested to weigh the arguments advanced on both sides, with candour, and to follow where conscience and the word of God leads.

A WILLIAM ELDER.

Annapolis, March 22, 1823.

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LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING lately had an opportunity of reading your letters in defence of infant sprinkling, I shall take the liberty to offer a few remarks upon them. I have not the least disposition to question the purity of your motives, in writing. As a professed disciple of Christ, and as a public teacher of his religion, you had an undoubted right to state your reasons, for practising as you do, and also to oppose any principles, or practice, which appeared to you unscriptural. Uniformity is beautiful in all things, and especially in religion. Our Lord prayed for his disciples, that they might all be one, and we find this prayer remarkably answered in the primitive church, when the multitude of believers were of one heart, and one mind, having one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. It is to be lamented that since that time, professing Christians have divided into many sects, and many errors in principle and practice, have prevailed among them; I cannot but hope however that light is increasing in the world, and that Christians are finding their way back to gospel principles and practices. I think that controversy on religious subjects, when conducted with a proper spirit, and with a desire to know the truth, has a tendency to do good in this respect.—The subject on which you have written, though it does not immediately affect the vitals of religion, yet is of considerable importance, as it inquires who are the proper subjects of the visible kingdom of Christ? and how they are to be introduced into that kingdom? As a baptist I am not sorry to see you oppose in this public manner, the distinguishing principles which we embrace, as it affords an opportunity of bringing the subject fairly before the public. If our principles and practice are founded on the word of God, they will bear the light; if they are not, let them fall. It was only the house built on the sand which fell, when tried by the storm, while that which was founded on a rock, remained unshaken.

The purport of your letters is to prove that infants are proper subjects for baptism, and that sprinkling is a scriptural mode of administering that ordinance. As I differ from you in both these particulars, I shall offer my reasons for so doing, and I trust I shall be enabled to do it with a Christian spirit.

Your first letter does not seem to have any immediate bearing upon the subject, except as it states that baptism is a substitute for circumcision. I have no hesitation in admitting that there is a general resemblance between circumcision and baptism, as they both draw a visible line of distinction, between the professing people of God, and the world; but I conceive that we cannot discover from the law of circumcision, who are fit subjects for baptism, as the covenant of circumcision has waxed old, and vanished away, and a new and better covenant has been brought in, which embraces the believing Jew and Gentile; and it is from this new

covenant that we are to learn, who are interested in it, and what laws they are to obey.

Your first argument in favour of infant baptism, is drawn from Jewish proselyte baptism. You remark, page 7, "that the ordinance of baptism does not appear to have originated with our Lord, and his Apostles, but to have been adopted by them from the Jewish church;" and you inform us in the words of an English prelate, "that the Jews constantly baptized every proselyte who came over to them from the nations, from the time of Moses; and that this baptism was administered to infants as well as grown persons." It appears to me, that, by resorting to this argument, you give up the argument drawn from circumcision. If christian baptism be only a continuation of Jewish proselyte baptism, it cannot be a substitute for circumcision, therefore one or the other of these arguments must be given up. But further I would observe, there is no evidence that proselyte baptism existed, in our Lord's time.—That the Jews had divers immersions or baptisms, enjoined on them by the law of Moses in cases of ceremonial uncleanness is evident; but it does not appear from the scripture, nor from any authentic history, that the Jews ever practised any such thing as the immersing of one person in water by another, as a religious rite, till the coming of John the baptist, and he professed to be sent by God for this purpose; and it was generally admitted by the Jews that his baptism was from heaven and not of men.—In Exod. xii. 48, 49, we have a command to circumcise proselytes. "When a stranger will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it. One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger." Had there been any divine command for proselyte baptism, here we should have found it; but it is in fact excluded. It is said one law shall be to him that is home-born, and to the stranger; and as there was no law for the baptism of the home-born, so there is none for the stranger. Further, we have an account in the 21st chapter of Deuteronomy of the ceremonies that were to be used, when a Jew would marry a female captive taken in war, (a heathen woman); such a woman when married to a Jew, would undoubtedly be a member of the Jewish church; yet there is no mention of her being baptized. It appears to me that this amounts to a demonstration, that the Jews had no such ordinance among them in the time of Moses. Dr. Gill observes that there is no mention of this proselyte baptism in the Old or New Testament, nor in the Apocrypha, nor in the writings of Philo or Josephus, nor in any of the Christian Fathers, for the first three or four centuries; but as he was a baptist, I shall give the testimony of some learned pedobaptists. The learned and laborious Dr. Benton says, "I have not found any instance of one person's washing another by way of consecration, purification, or sanctification, except that of Moses' washing Aaron and his sons, when he set them apart for the office of priests, Lev. viii. 6.

2. I cannot find that the Jews do at present practise any such thing as that of baptizing the proselytes that go over to them, though they are said to make them wash themselves."

3. He asks "where is there any intimation of such a practice, before the coming of our Lord? If any one could produce any clear testimony of that kind, from the Old Testament, Apocrypha, Josephus, or Philo, that would be of great moment."

4. He adds, "In former times (that is, after the coming of our Lord) proselytes coming over from heathenism, to the Jewish religion, used to wash themselves, which is a very different thing from baptism, or one person's being washed by another, though I must own I cannot see how *infants* could wash themselves."—Benson on St. Paul's Epistles, vol. 1. dis. 8.

Dr. Jennings—"But after all it remains to be proved, not only that Christian baptism was instituted in the room of proselyte baptism, but that the Jews had any such baptism in our Saviour's time. The earliest accounts we have of it are in the Mishna and Gemara; the former compiled, as the Jews assert, by Rabbi Juda in the second century; though learned men in general bring it several centuries lower; the latter not till the seventh century.—There is not a word of it in Philo, nor yet in Josephus, though he gives an account of the proselyting of the Idumeans by Hyrcanus."—*Jewish Antiquities*, vol. 1. p. 136.

Dr. Owen—"The institution of the rite of baptism is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament, nor was it ever used in the admission of proselytes, while the Jewish Church continued. No mention of it occurs in Philo, in Josephus, in Jesus the Son of Sirach, nor in the Evangelical History. This Rabbinical opinion therefore owes its rise to the Ante Mishnal Doctors after the destruction of their city. The opinion of some learned men therefore about the transferring of a Jewish baptismal rite (which in reality did not then exist) by the Lord Jesus, for the use of his disciples, is destitute of all probability." *Theologoumena*, L. 5, dig. 4.

Dr. Lardner—"As for the baptism of Jewish proselytes I take it to be a mere fiction of the Rabbins by whom we have suffered ourselves to be imposed upon."—*Letters to and from Dr. Dodridge*, p. 275.

From what has been said I think it will appear evident, that there was no such divine institution as proselyte baptism, that we have no reason to believe, there was any such practice among the Jews in our Lord's time, and that when it did exist, it was merely a tradition of the Rabbins, and was essentially different from Christian baptism. It will follow that the baptism of John, was the only baptism in use, previous to our Lord's giving command to his disciples to baptize, and as John baptized his disciples in Jordan, confessing their sins, his practice will forever remain opposed to infant sprinkling.

You next proceed to consider the command given by our Lord to his disciples, *Mat. xxviii. 19.* "Go ye, therefore, and teach all

nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And you observe that as our Lord adopted baptism from the Jewish church, without any restriction as to the subjects, you infer, that, infants are proper subjects for Christian baptism. If it could be made appear that the Jews did practise baptism in the case of proselytes from the time of Moses, and that they baptized infants, as well as adults, there would be some force in your inference; for we should then conclude they had a divine command for it, though not recorded. But as it cannot be proved that they had such a practice, either in the time of Moses, or of our Lord, your inference must fall to the ground, having no premises to support it. Further I would observe, if our Lord borrowed baptism from the Jews, John did also. Yet we never find that he baptized any infants. It is supposed that it was about seven years from the beginning of John's ministry, till our Lord's death. During all that time John or our Lord's disciples, were engaged in making disciples, and baptizing them; and we never find that they baptized an infant. Can there be any satisfactory reason given, why they should not have baptized infants during that period, if they borrowed baptism from the Jewish Church? and the Jews were constantly in the practice of baptizing the infants of those, who were proselyted to Judaism.

You observe on these words of our Lord to his disciples, that you are aware that it has been objected that they make teaching preparatory to baptizing, and you think this objection is obviated by translating the words, "Go ye, and disciple all nations, &c." And you think we are compelled to this translation to avoid what Mr. Wesley calls "vain tautology, senseless repetition." I imagine however, that few judicious persons will think there is any vain tautology, or senseless repetition in our present translation. The teaching in the first part of the commission, means the fundamental principles of the Gospel, concerning which it is said, "he that believeth shall be saved." The teaching them to observe all things which Christ had commanded in the last part of the commission, means all that further instruction in righteousness that the young convert would need, that he might grow in grace and in the further knowledge of the Saviour. That the word *matheteusate* (rendered by our translators teach) includes the idea of teaching, is evident from the manner in which it is used elsewhere. We have the same word, Acts xiv. 21.—"And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many." Here the means used determines the sense.—They taught many; how? The text informs us it was by preaching the gospel. We find this word also in Mat. xiii. 52.—"Therefore every scribe who is instructed unto the kingdom, is like unto a man who is an householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasures things new and old." Here the sense is clear from the effect.—The scribe by being instructed acquires a treasure of knowledge, from which he bringeth forth instruction to others. It no doubt imports to make

disciples; but disciple is not an arbitrary designation; it signifies a *learner*, or *one who is taught*, which is expressive of teaching as the cause; so that a person can no more be a disciple without being taught, than he can be a convert without being converted." — See M'Lean on the Apostolic Commission, page 16.

Dr. Campbell translates these words, "Go, therefore, convert all nations, baptizing them, &c." And he remarks on them, "There are manifestly three things which our Lord here distinctly enjoins his apostles to execute, viz. to convert them to the faith, to initiate the converts into the church by baptism, and to instruct the baptized in all the duties of the christian life." — Four gospels and note on the place. This is the language of common sense, and will immediately strike every candid person as the true meaning of the passage; and it forever forbids the baptism of all persons, old or young, who are not converted, discipled, or taught. You translate these words, "Go — disciple all nations, baptizing them, &c. but you do not tell us what you understand by discipling them; whether it means something previous to baptism, or baptism itself. If discipling the nations mean baptizing them, it will read thus,—"Go ye, therefore, disciple all nations, discipling them, &c. This I think would be more vain repetition and senseless tautology than our present translation. If discipling mean something previous to baptizing, I would ask what that something is, and how it is performed in the case of infant baptism. This commission is what every gospel minister professes to act under, and I think every one who practises infant baptism should seriously enquire—by what authority do I apply this gospel ordinance to those who are incapable of professing faith in the Saviour?"

You also advert to the words of Peter on the day of Pentecost, when he exhorted adults to repent and be baptized, and at the same time declared the promise was unto them and their children. I would ask, sir, what promise this is, that the apostle alludes to in the 17th verse of Acts ii. he quotes the following promise from Joel—"And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, &c." In the 38th verse he says,—"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The promise is of pouring out of the Holy Spirit in his extraordinary influences and miraculous operations, so that they should prophesy. The persons upon whom he was to be poured out were them, and their sons and daughters, and those who were afar off, viz. the Jews, scattered in foreign countries, (for it does not appear that the apostles yet understood that the gentiles were to be called) even as many as the Lord their God should call. As an encouragement to repent and be baptized, he assures them God would pour out his Spirit upon them and their

children; the Jews that were afar off and their children, even as many of them as God should call by his grace. But what has this to do with infant baptism? nothing at all. We do not read of God's calling infants by his grace, and enabling them to prophesy. This is so evident that many pedobaptists give up this place as having no allusion to infant baptism: among this number are, Whitsius, Limborch, Venema, Dr. Owen, Hammond, Whitby and Doddridge.—See Judson's Sermon on baptism, page 22.

Your next argument is from the baptism of the households mentioned in Scripture; and you inform us in a note, that there were five households baptized. But this I think is a mistake; you will find there are but three households mentioned as being baptized. The persons who were baptized with Cornelius were his kinsmen and near friends, whom he had sent for. Neither is it said that the household of Crispus were baptized, though it is said that they believed. You observe that it would be extraordinary if there should be no infants in these households; but we have a similar case in the Old Testament; there were four households in the ark, and yet but eight persons. But we will examine the circumstances connected with the baptism of these households. The first mentioned is that of Lydia: It appears that she was a woman of Thyatira, residing in Philippi for the purpose of trade. It does not appear that she had a husband or children. It is more probable that her household was composed of assistants in her business, who believed and were baptized. For we are informed that when Paul and Silas left the prison, they entered into the house of Lydia, and comforted *the brethren*. These brethren must have been her household, as we do not read that Paul had made any converts at Philippi, but the family of the jailor and that of Lydia. On the subject of Lydia's household, Dr. Whitby says, "And when she and her household were instructed in the christian faith, and the nature of baptism required by it, she was baptized, and her household." The Assembly of Divines, in their note on this text, say, "Paul and Silas entered into the house of Lydia, doubtless to confirm them in the faith which they had preached to them. Lydia and hers, hearing of their deliverance, could not but be comforted and confirmed in the faith. In the case of the jailor and his household, Paul and Silas "spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house; and he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house." M^r Knight on these words, "having believed in God, with all his house," says, "who it seems were equally impressed with Paul's sermon as the jailor himself was." Calvin on this subject also observes, "In which also the grace of God illustriously appeared, because it suddenly brought the whole family to a pious consent." The third household is that of Stephanas, concerning which M^r Knight thus writes;—"The family of Stephanas seem all to have been adults at the time they were baptized; for they are said, 1 Cor. xvi. 15, to have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints." Trans. of the Apos. Epis. note on 1 Cor. xvi.

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Dr. Oughton—“It therefore seems that the family of Stephen were all adult believers, and so were baptized upon their own personal profession of faith in Christ.”—Note on 1 Cor. 1, 16. Here we find learned pedobaptists, when their system was out of sight, admitting that these households were all professed believers in Christ. You also observe that infant baptism is just in a similar predicament with the Christian sabbath, viz.—no command for either. But though we have no express command for keeping the first day of the week as a day of rest and worship; yet, we have the example of the Apostles and primitive Christians: Acts 20, 7, and 1 Cor. 16. And it is also termed the Lord's day: Rev. 1, 10. And this is a sufficient warrant for us; to go and do likewise: and could it be shewn that the Apostles ever baptized an infant, we would not hesitate to imitate them; but while this cannot be proved, there will remain an essential difference between the warrant for keeping the first day of the week, and that for baptizing infants. You proceed to charge us with two tremendous consequences, as resulting from our objection, that want of faith incapacitates infants for baptism. The first is, that it charges the Almighty with folly in ordaining circumcision; which was “a seal of the righteousness of faith” to be administered to Jewish infants of eight days old.” In answer to this I would observe, that you do not quote the expression correctly. It is never said in scripture that circumcision is a seal of the righteousness of faith generally as you quote it. It is said; Rom. 4, 11.—“And his (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision; a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet, being uncircumcised.” A seal is for confirmation of some transaction which has already taken place. Abraham had already exercised strong faith in the promises of God. As a proof of the righteousness or acceptableness of this faith in God's sight, he gave him circumcision, and the covenant of which it was a sign or token. But when circumcision was administered to an infant or unbelieving adult, it could not be a seal of the righteousness of the faith which they already had, when they in reality had none. To all others it was a sign or token of the covenant.—See Gen. 17, 11. Rom. 4, 11. But further I would observe; circumcision was a national mark of distinction to separate the seed of Abraham after the flesh, from all other people. When God selected the seed of Abraham to be the depositaries of the oracles of God, and to preserve the light of divine truth in the world till the coming of the Saviour; one great object in view in giving them the ceremonial law was, to preserve them distinct from other nations. Idolatry had then generally prevailed through the world; and to preserve them from the contagion, it was necessary to prevent their having much intercourse with the idolatrous nations. Hence the ceremonial law generally was termed “a wall of partition” to divide them from the gentiles: This was one great end which circumcision was to answer. It was a mark in the flesh which could never be erased,

and which distinguished the possessor as a Jew from all other people. This we think, sufficiently accounts for its being administered to infants. As it was to be a family and national mark, there was a propriety in its being performed in infancy, as it then caused less pain and trouble; and God particularly pointed out the eighth day for that purpose. And we believe had he appointed infant baptism he would have specified the day also, that his people should have no difficulty in knowing their duty. Thus you see, dear brother, we do not charge the Almighty with folly in appointing circumcision to be administered to Jewish infants: we believe he had wise reasons for so doing. We only charge those with folly who confound circumcision and baptism, the old covenant and the new together.

Your next charge is that our reasoning brings in its train all the horrors of infant damnation. Here I am sorry to see you appeal to the passions and prejudices of your readers, instead of speaking the words of truth and soberness. You observe that if our Lord's commission include infants so as to forbid their being baptized, it also includes them and forbids their being saved; for it is written, "he that believeth not shall be damned." We believe that the command to "teach all nations" is equivalent to the command to "preach the gospel to every creature," and the meaning of it is to teach or preach the gospel to every individual of the human family who has arrived at years of understanding. We do not believe that the gospel was intended to be preached to infants, or that they can be saved by believing it, or damned for not believing it. Hence we believe that when it is said "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned:" it has respect only to those who hear the gospel. I believe I speak the sentiments of the baptists generally, when I say that we believe infants are implicated in the transgression of the first man, so as to be partakers of a depraved nature, and to be liable to pain, sickness, and death. But we do not assert that they will be condemned at the bar of God, as the scriptures do not say so; and we do not pretend to be wise above what is written. On the contrary, we have good hope in the mercy of God that all infants dying in that state are fitted for the employment of a heavenly state, and through the death and sufferings of the Saviour, are brought into that rest which remains for the people of God.

Your next argument in favour of infant baptism is drawn from Mat. 19, 13—15.—"Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence." You remark on this passage that "the parents of these children were evidently believers in Christ as the Messiah; for they brought their children that they might receive his blessing." But

I would ask what proof is this of it. When Joseph brought his children to receive his father's blessing on his dying bed, was this a proof that he thought his father to be the Messiah. It appears to me that these people thought our Lord to be a good man, a prophet; and knowing that the prayers of a righteous man availeth much, they naturally desired his prayers in behalf of their children. You further inform us that this was the form of consecrating children to God in those days. I would ask, why you term our Lord's putting his hands on these children, and praying, ~~and~~ consecrating them to God? The scripture does not term it so, and why should we. But further I would ask how many ways the Jews had of consecrating their children to God. You inform us that circumcision was the rite of initiation, the way of dedicating their children to God; if so, why should they want another way; or if this was the way of consecrating children to God, when was it changed into baptism. I would propose three questions on this passage, which, with their answers, I think will show that it proves nothing in favour of infant baptism. 1. Were these children brought to our Lord to be baptized? The answer is, No, they were brought that he might put his hands on them, and pray. 2. Did our Lord baptize them when brought. The answer is, No, he put his hands on them, and prayed. Surely our Lord knew the proper method of dedicating children to God. Baptism was then in use; he had been baptized of John in Jordan, as an example to his followers; and if these children were brought to be dedicated to God, or admitted into his kingdom, was not this a most favourable opportunity to baptize them, and thus give an example to his disciples till the end of time. But again, Did our Lord give any direction to his disciples to baptize them; or did he give any intimation that the time should come when infants would be baptized. I answer, he did not. When our Lord said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, it appears to be merely applicable to that instance, and not intended for any general direction. Our translators have rendered it in Mark, Suffer the little children. In Matthew and Luke, Suffer little children. But those who are acquainted with the original inform us, that the article is inserted in all the evangelists in the Greek. Had our translators rendered it suffer the little children, in each instance it would have made a considerable difference in the meaning. Without the article, the words seem to form a general direction concerning little children; but with the article they, evidently form a particular direction concerning *those children* whose approach the disciples were preventing.—See Judson's Sermon on baptism, p.30.

As every circumstance in this passage is unfavourable to infant baptism, the whole weight of your argument must rest on the words "for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Does he mean of such in age and size, or of such in humility and docility of disposition. His subsequent remark determines in favour of the latter meaning: for in Mark and Luke it follows, "Whosoever shall not re-

ive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter there-
 in." and in Mat. 18, 3. we find him saying, "Except ye be con-
 veyed, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the
 kingdom of heaven." If then our Lord meant of such as were
 little children spiritually, it affords no proof of infant church mem-
 bership, and of course none of infant baptism. But I would also
 observe, that your argument drawn from this passage destroys
 itself by proving too much. You contend that our Lord meant
 that little children literally are fit members of his visible church.
 If so, they have as much a right to the Lord's supper as they have
 to baptism. You ask why our children have not as much a right
 to baptism as the Jewish children had to circumcision. I also ask
 why our children have not as good a right to the Lord's supper
 as the Jewish children had to the passover. The argument drawn
 from this passage in favour of infant baptism is of no weight,
 unless you are prepared to defend infant communion also.

You inform us in a note, that our Lord's kingdom is spiritual,
 that his subjects are spiritual, and that these children were spiritu-
 al; and in explaining what it is to be spiritual, you say it is to be
 in a state of justification. It appears to me there is a wonderful
 confusion in your ideas on this subject. I should think to be spi-
 ritual in a scriptural sense, referred rather to sanctification than to
 justification. Our Lord says, "That which is born of the flesh
 is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Hence I
 infer that to be spiritual, we must be born of the spirit. You tell
 us, p. 26, "that baptism is symbolical of our interest, as guilty
 and depraved creatures, in the blood of Christ, and the sanctify-
 ing influences of his Spirit." And as you contend that baptism
 ought to be applied to infants, I take it for granted that you be-
 lieve that infants are guilty and depraved creatures. Now if this
 be the case, how can they be spiritual without being born of the
 Spirit? or, how can they be lively stones fitted for a gospel
 church, while in a state of nature? You must, I think, give up
 the doctrine of original sin, or contend that infants are regenera-
 ted in baptism, or else you must admit that they are not fit sub-
 jects for our Lord's kingdom, which "is a spiritual house, a holy
 priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by
 Jesus Christ."

Your next argument is drawn from 1 Cor. 7, 14, where you
 suppose the Apostle makes a difference between the children of
 believers and unbelievers; considering the one as clean, the other
 as unclean. You suppose that the difference between the child-
 ren of the heathen and those of the christian, consisted in the for-
 mer being dedicated to idols, and the latter to the true God by
 baptism. This is a new exposition to me, and it appears the most
 forced and unnatural one I have ever seen. Pedobaptists gene-
 rally contend that the holiness ascribed to the children in this
 text is a kind of federal or relative holiness, that resulted from one
 of the parents being a believer, and which would smite them to
 baptism, and the uncleanness spoken of to be a want of that rela-

tive holiness in case neither of the parents was a believer. Hence they have contended that where both the parents were unbelievers, the children had no right to baptism. You observe that "you think it evident, that the difficulty which the Apostle solved originated in the state of the children, provided one party continued a heathen." It appears to me there is not a shadow of reason in your supposition. Any person who reads the chapter with attention will see that the difficulty concerned the propriety of entering into the married state, and continuing in it in different cases. The Apostle introduces the chapter thus; "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me, it is good for a man not to touch a woman, &c." This shews marriage was the subject on which they had wrote to him. Mr. Scott on this passage supposes that as the Corinthians had come out of a state of heathenism, some of them pleaded for the lawfulness of fornication, while others had imbibed the sentiments of the Pythagorians, and to have deemed marriage itself inconsistent with christian purity, or at least inimical to intellectual improvement. They had written to the Apostle on this subject, and the seventh chapter is an answer to their inquiries. The Apostle says in his improvement of the subject, verse 27, "Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed:" which shews that some of them had thoughts of leaving their wives. To dissuade them from this he says, verse 10, "Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband." He here addresses married persons, where both parties were christians, and refers to where our Lord had declared the marriage covenant to be perpetual; and that having been joined by the Lord, men should not put them asunder. But as a doubt might arise, whether our Lord's words would apply to a case where one was a heathen, and the other a christian; he goes on to give directions in this case, and says, ver. 12, "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord; If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away." Here the Apostle suspends their living together upon no other condition, but the willingness of the unbeliever. He makes no mention of any agreement to baptize their children as you suppose, nor any mention of their being dedicated to idols. It is as if he had said, Difference of religion is not a sufficient reason for dissolving the marriage tie. Our Lord has decided that nothing but adultery or death can do this. Therefore it is your duty to live together, if the unbelieving party is willing. If it were not so; if marriage was unlawful among christians; or, if difference of religion dissolved it, then your living together would be unlawful, and your children would be unclean or illegitimate in the sight of God, as being begotten in a state that God had not sanctioned or made lawful. But now, seeing your living together is approved of God, your children are holy or legitimate as being in a state appointed by God. If this be the true meaning of the text, then it establishes no difference between the children of believers and those of unbelievers. It only proves that marriage is

a state of God's appointment, and that is honourable in all; and that difference of religion does not dissolve it. And the Apostle's assertion with respect to the state of the children refers just as much to those who were both believers, mentioned verse 10, as to those where one party was a heathen. And the Apostle urges them to remain together, just as much as where one party was a believer and the other an unbeliever. The words which respect the children in the close of the 14th verse, appear to be merely a reflection in passing upon the whole subject of the lawfulness of marriage in different cases. But if we admit your exposition, that the holiness of the children consists in being dedicated to God, it must follow, that the unbelieving parent is dedicated to God also; for to be sanctified and to be made holy is the same thing. But in the exposition I have proposed, every thing appears consistent. The sanctification of the unbelieving wife, means no more than a being set apart by the marriage institution, so as to be a lawful wife, though an unbeliever; and the holiness of the child flows from the same source the marriage institution, and is of the same nature, that is, it is a lawful child in God's account. This is confirmed by the words in the original. Our translators have rendered it,—The unbelieving husband is sanctified. But we are informed, in the original it is,—The unbelieving husband *has been* sanctified by, or to, the wife; which evidently looks back to the marriage institution as the source of this sanctification.—See Chapin's Letters, page 88.

I cannot dismiss this subject without remarking a little further on your exposition.—1. You inform us the heathen had various practices to dedicate their children to idols before they were born. This is entirely without proof. 2. You inform us all conscientious christians made it a matter of conscience to dedicate their children to God in baptism. Is not this a mere begging the question? You take for granted the very thing in dispute. 3. You inform us that Paul insisted that the heathen party should agree to have their children separated from the heathen, and dedicated to the true God in baptism. There is not a word of this agreement spoken of in the text; and it appears to me highly absurd to expect such a thing. Let us suppose the husband to be the unbeliever; Can any person suppose he would give up the government of his family to his wife, and permit her to have their children baptized, when the christians were considered the scum and offscouring of all things. But you have prepared a second comment on this text. You observe that if this be not the meaning of the text, then it is still more favourable to infant baptism, as it must mean the children of believers are really holy; and so you have a right to demand admission for them into the Church of Christ, as having received the Holy Ghost as well as Apostles.

This is a point that many who practise infant baptism have endeavoured to establish; but I could not but be surprised to hear such a sentiment from a minister of your denomination; a senti-

ment so contrary to Scripture and experience, and so dangerous to the souls of men.

Your next argument is drawn from the address of the Apostle to the churches of Ephesus and Colosse, in which you suppose he considers infants as members of those churches. That there were parents and children in the primitive churches, no one can doubt who reads the New Testament; for we read of whole households believing, rejoicing, and being baptized, viz.—The whole of the household who had come to years of understanding. But I think we nowhere read of infants being baptized, or of their being considered as church members. The day in which the Apostles lived was a day of great grace; and God was pleased sometimes to give his word abundant success in the conversion of whole families. In some of those families there would be children or descendants from twenty or thirty years of age, down to infants at the breast. Perhaps some would be converted to God as young as ten or twelve years; and God would thus perfect praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. In such cases they would receive the word gladly, be baptized, and added to the church. But their thus professing faith in the Saviour would not dissolve the connection between them and their parents. It would still be necessary for their parents to instruct and admonish them; and it would be necessary for them to be exhorted to obey their parents in the Lord. We are told that our Lord, when twelve years of age, went up to Jerusalem, and sat among the Doctors, hearing and asking them questions. Yet we are told immediately after, that he went down with his parents to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. Our Lord was then sufficiently old to be a member of a gospel church: yet he was subject to his parents; and where would have been the impropriety of such an exhortation to him as was addressed to the children at Ephesus and Colosse. We are apt to affix the idea of infancy to the word children; but we are told by the learned, that the word in the original, in the passages you allude to, means descendants generally, without respect to age or sex. Of course nothing certain can be learned with respect to their age from this term, and the very circumstance of the Apostle's instructing and exhorting them shews that they were not infants. That the Epistles to the churches in the New Testament were addressed to persons who had come to years of understanding; who had once been sinners, and who then professed to be saints, is evident to any person who will read for himself. Thus the Epistle to the Ephesians is addressed "to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:" and again, "you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:" and again, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption," and "ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. With what propriety could such things be said to infants, or to all persons who had been sprinkled in their infancy. Is it not then evident

that the primitive churches were composed of true and real saints, or at least of those who professed to be so, and not of the whole population of the land, as is the case where infant baptism prevails. You observe with respect to the children of the members of the churches of Ephesus and Colosse (in which of course you include infants, as it would not be to your purpose otherwise), that "there is no shade of difference indicated. They come in as complete compeers with the classes which precede and follow. Included thus in the church without the slightest note of distinction; what can be more evident than that they made a part of the church in the mind of the includer." If all the children of christian parents are members of the churches to which their parents belong, if they come in as complete compeers with their parents, and there is no shade of difference, they certainly have a right to the Lord's supper, and to have a voice in all the affairs of the church. Your arguments from these passages then totally defeat themselves by proving too much. And until you admit all your children to every privilege of the christian church, you can with no consistency use these arguments in favour of infant baptism.

You further observe, that "A rational being would suppose that the common sense of a heathen, but especially the piety of a christian, would make him shudder at the thought of educating a child amidst the dangers to which it is exposed without first dedicating it to God, and thereby placing it under his protection and blessing." If I may speak it without giving offence, I must say that I think there is a much greater share of superstition than of either good sense or piety in your ideas on this subject. Baptism is a positive institution, not discoverable by the light of reason, nor to be inferred from the fitness of things like moral duties, but is dependant entirely upon the will of the instituter: consequently it is a duty only to such persons, and under such circumstances as it has been commanded. The same may be said of circumcision; it was a duty for Abraham to circumcise his male children after he received a command on the eighth day; but it was not his duty to circumcise before he received a command nor was it his duty to circumcise before the eighth day, nor was it his duty to invent some ceremony that would extend to his female children, under a pretence of dedicating them to God, and placing them under his protection and blessing. When our Lord sent out his disciples to convert the nations, he commanded them to preach the gospel to every creature; and declared that "he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." But he did not command them to baptize any who did not profess to believe; nor did he make any promise to those who were baptized without believing: he did not say that baptism without faith would place any one under his protection and blessing; nor do we find that ever John the baptist, or our Lord, or his Apostles baptized an infant. If this be the case, then I think neither good sense nor piety would lead us to baptize infants. You also urge the example of Joseph:

and Mary in presenting our Lord in the temple to induce us to baptize our children. But you no doubt recollect that where Luke mentions this event he gives a quotation from the law which they were under, to shew that it was required. Now, all we ask is the same direction. Give us a command or an example from the New Testament, and we will cheerfully present our children to the Lord.

You also inform us that the duty enjoined in the following words of Moses, is not to be confined to the Mosaic dispensation. "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is within thy camp, that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself; and that he may be unto thee a God." What nation do you conceive has succeeded into the place of the Jews. God was their political Sovereign; he had taken them to be a people near unto himself above all the people of the earth. But that covenant made with the seed of Abraham after the flesh, has been long since done away, and there is now no nation on the earth that has a right to claim the character of the people of God. Neither would it be practicable to assemble any nation for that purpose. The good people in Scotland once attempted this in their solemn league and covenant: but it soon fell through; and so will all attempts to blend the old and new covenants together.

Your last argument in favour of infant baptism is drawn from ecclesiastical history. Here I would observe, your first and last arguments are drawn from sources which we place no great confidence in, viz. human authority. We think that as the scripture is the only standard of the christian's faith and practice, God has given us sufficient means of knowing his will from that, especially on a point which is the duty of every believer. You inform us on the authority of some learned man, that the Jews baptized all proselytes who came over to them from the heathen nations, with their children, from the time of Moses; and you make this a principal foundation for infant baptism. We look into the Bible, and find a command for circumcising proselytes, but no command for baptizing them, nor any account of the practice; and another man, equally learned with your informant, declares that no such practice existed among the Jews in our Lord's time. What must the plain unlettered christian do? Must he learn Hebrew and consult the Jewish Rabbins, before he can obtain satisfaction respecting a gospel ordinance. Is it because there is no lawgiver in Israel that we must be thus sent to Baalzebub the god of Ekron for counsel? Again, a plain man has doubts on the subject of infant baptism; to silence them you refer him to Ecclesiastical History. Must he learn two languages, and inquire what the Greek and Latin fathers have said on the subject. Must he be able to reconcile all the various and discordant accounts given by popes, councils, and fathers, before he can make up his mind on

the subject? Is there not a more sure word of prophesy to which we do well to take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place. We do not however wish to reject any information which can be obtained from any source, where we can be satisfied it is correct. Baptists who have had an opportunity of consulting the writings of the early ages of christianity, inform us that there is no mention of infant baptism in christian writers of the first century, though they frequently mention the baptism of believers: and that there is no mention of it till just at the close of the second century. If this be the case it looks very dark upon the practice. You only make two extracts from the fathers of the first two centuries, and in neither of these is infant baptism once mentioned. I observe also that you follow the practice of most writers in favour of infant baptism. You date your evidences not from the birth of Christ, but from the death of the Apostle John, who died A. D. 100. The unwary reader is in danger of losing 100 years, not noticing but that you reckon time in the usual way, viz. from the birth of Christ. Your first evidence is Justin Martyr, who wrote about A. D. 150. His words are, "Several persons among us of sixty and seventy years old, were disciples to Christ in or from their childhood;" and you observe that the word used by Justin, *emathetesan*, is the very same word used by Mat. 23, 19, in expressing our Saviour's command to disciple all nations. But in all this I see no proof of infant baptism. When our Lord gave command to disciple or convert the nations, it was something that was previous to baptism: for our Lord "*made and baptized more disciples than John.*" He also informs us that "except a man deny himself, and take up his cross and follow him, he could not be his disciple." I think this could never be said of an infant. Young Timothy is said to have known the scriptures from a child; yet I conclude no one will say he knew them while an infant. He must have learned them in the usual way; and I have no doubt but he was baptized at an early age; it however was not until he had been made a disciple of, and so no doubt it was with these disciples mentioned by Justin.

The Monthly Review for May 1784, page 394, in remarking upon infant baptism, says, "The authorities produced in the second century; are Justin Martyr and Irenaeus. With respect to the testimony of Justin, it requires very considerable ingenuity to make it in any view an argument in favour of infant baptism. There is a passage in Irenaeus more to the purpose, *but the passage is equivocal.*" Your next witness is Irenaeus, who says of Christ, "Not disdaining nor going in a way above human nature, nor breaking in his own person the law which he had set for mankind, but sanctifying every several age by the likeness it had to him. For he came to save all persons by himself; all, I mean, who by him are regenerated unto God, infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elderly persons. Therefore he went through the several ages for infants, being made an infant sanctifying in-

ants, &c." Chapin in his strictures on Moore's reply to his letters, observes, that this passage is generally viewed by the learned as spurious, and for proof it refers to Du Pin,—vol. 1, p. 67, 68, and 71, and to Gale, p. 464. But if it be genuine, it does not prove infant baptism. The whole force of your proof from this author rests upon the word regenerated, which you contend means baptized in this place; it would then read, "For he came to save all persons by himself; all, I mean, who by him are baptized unto God." How can it be said persons are baptized by Christ unto God when he baptized none. It may with propriety be said, all who are saved are regenerated by Christ; for he is a quickening Spirit, who gives life to those who were dead in trespasses and sins. Le Clerc, in remarking upon these words, says, "We see nothing here concerning baptism, nor is there any words relating to it in the immediately preceding or following words."—See Judson on baptism, p. 35. The first christian writer who mentions infant baptism is Tertullian, who wrote about the beginning of the third century, and he opposed it. His words are, as translated by Du Pin, "Jesus Christ says indeed, Hinder not little children from coming to me; but that they should come to him as soon as they are advanced in years, as soon as they have learnt their religion, when they may be taught whither they are going when they are become christians, when they begin to be able to know Jesus Christ. What is there that should compel this innocent age to receive baptism. And since they are not yet allowed the disposal of temporal goods, is it reasonable that they should be intrusted with the concerns of heaven." Professor Venema observes on these words, that Tertullian would never have opposed the baptism of infants if it had been at that time an established custom of the church; for he was very tenacious of traditions; and had it been a tradition he would not have failed to mention it."—See Venema, as quoted by Judson, p. 34.

Erasmus—"Paul does not seem (in Rom. 5, 14) to treat about infants—*It was not yet the custom for infants to be baptized.*"* *Luther*—"It cannot be proved by the Sacred Scriptures that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians after Christ."† *M. De La Roque*—"The primitive church did not baptize infants; and the learned Grotius proves,† it in his annot. on the gospel.‡ *Mr. Chambers*—"It appears that none were baptized but adults in primitive times." *Bishop Barlow*—"I do believe and know that there is neither precept nor example in Scripture for pedobaptism, nor any just evidence for it for about two hundred years after Christ."—Letter to Mr. J Tombs.

From these writers and a host of others, (all pedobaptists) it appears that there is no proof of the existence of infant baptism till

* *Annot. on Rom. 5, 14* † *A. R.'s Vanity of Infant Baptism, part 2, p. 8.* ‡ *Stenutt's Answer to Russen, p. 188.* § *Cyclopaedia, Art. Baptism.*

about the close of the second, and beginning of the third centuries; and then Terullian appears opposing it. If infant baptism was always practised in the church of Christ, how can it be accounted for that it should never be once mentioned, neither in the New Testament, nor in any Christian writer for more than 150 years after the death of our Lord.

Your next evidence is Origen. It is said by the learned that the quotations made from this father in favour of infant baptism, are taken from a corrupt Latin version, by Rufinus; and that it is so interpolated and changed as to be of no authority in this controversy. The only passage from the original Greek of Origen, which is produced in proof of this practice, contains a clause which represents the infants as desiring *the sincere milk of the word*. Therefore Dr. Wall acknowledges "that this does very much puzzle the case, and make it doubtful whether Origen is to be there understood of infants in age, or of such christian men as are endued with the innocence and simplicity of infants."—*His. of Inf. Bap.* Part 1. p. 32.

Your next proof is from the African Council of 66 bishops, convened at Carthage, A. D. 253. It seems Fidus, a country bishop, could not tell by his Bible at what time infants were to be baptized, whether on the eighth day or previous to it. He therefore applied to Cyprian, who called a council on the occasion. All this is a proof that infant baptism was a new affair not settled by any law, human or divine. If infant baptism had always been practised, would not Fidus have known that the time when it was performed was not essential. And the council, who decided that baptism might be performed at any time after the birth of the child, do not say a word about its being a tradition of the church, but advance a variety of arguments to prove that infants may be baptized before the eighth day; the last of which is, "that infants come into the world begging for baptism by their cries and tears." This council is indeed a proof that infant baptism prevailed at that time in Africa; but it is a proof that it was a new thing there; and it does not appear that it prevailed in any other part of the world for a considerable time after this.

Grotius—"It seems to me that the baptism of infants was of old much more frequently practised in Africa than in Asia, or other parts of the world, and with a certain opinion of the greater necessity of it. For you will not find in any of the councils a more ancient mention of this custom than in the council of Carthage."—Annot. on Mat. 19, 14.

Episcopus—"Pedobaptism was not accounted a necessary rite till it was determined so to be in the Melevitan council held in the year 418."—*Institut. Theolog.* L. 4 C. 14.

Dr. Doddridge—"It is indeed surprising that nothing more express is to be met with in antiquity on this subject."—*Lect.* p. 522.

Daille—"In ancient times they often deferred the baptizing both of infants and of other people, as appears by the history of

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the Emperors Constantine, Constantius, Theodosius, Valentinian, and of Gratian in St. Ambrose; and also by the orations and homilies of Gregory Nazianzen, and of St. Basil, upon this subject."—Right use of the Fathers, B. 2. C. 6. p. 149.

Curcellanus—"The baptism of infants in the two first centuries after Christ was altogether unknown; but in the third and fourth was allowed by some few. In the fifth and following ages it was generally received. The custom of baptizing infants did not begin before the third age after Christ was born. In the former ages no trace of it appears; and it was introduced without the command of Christ."—See this author as quoted by Judson, p. 36.

Vitringa—"The ancient christian church from the highest antiquity after the apostolic times, appears generally to have thought that baptism is absolutely necessary for all that would be saved by the grace of Jesus Christ. It was therefore customary in the ancient church, if infants were greatly afflicted and in danger of death, or if parents were affected with a singular concern about the salvation of their children, to present their infants or children, in their minority, to the bishop to be baptized. But if these reasons did not urge them, they thought it better and more for the interest of minors, that their baptism should be deferred till they arrived at a more advanced age, which custom was not yet abolished in the time of Austin, though he vehemently urged the necessity of baptism, while with all his might he defended the doctrines of grace against Pelagius."—See Judson, p. 35.

Salmasius—"An opinion prevailed that no one could be saved without being baptized, and for that reason the custom arose of baptizing infants."—Judson, p. 35.

From these witnesses and a number of others that might be adduced, it appears evident that soon after the apostolic age, corruptions began to creep into the church, and that it soon began to be supposed that baptism was essential to salvation. The consequence of this was, that in the latter part of the second century, some in Africa began to baptize infants, and by the middle of the third century it generally prevailed in Africa, but that it did not generally prevail in other parts of the christian world (except where there was immediate danger of death) till the fourth or fifth century. Infant baptism then did not arise from the command or example of Christ or his apostles, but from a supposition that baptism was essential to salvation; and as this appears to be a mistaken notion, it ought of course to be given up. You inform us that for the first 400 years after the birth of our Lord, there were but two men who opposed infant baptism, and that for the next 750 years there is not so much as one man to be found who either spoke for or practised a delay of infant baptism, but all the contrary. This is a tale that has been often told, but it will be believed only by those who have heard only one side of the question. In A. D. 418, the Melevitan Council at the instigation of Austin decreed the necessity of infant baptism in the following

terms:—"It is the pleasure of the bishops to order that whoever denieth that infants newly born of their mother are to be baptized—let him be accursed."—Robinson's *His. of Bap.* p. 202.

Now, if there were no persons to be found who denied or opposed infant baptism at this time, why this dreadful anathema? Robinson remarks on this, "If a man were driven to the necessity of choosing one saint of two candidates, it would not be Austin, it would be Balaam, who, though he loved the wages of unrighteousness, had respect enough for the Deity to say, *How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed.*"

Cardinal Hosius, *President of the Council of Trent*—"If the truth of religion were to be judged of by the readiness and cheerfulness which a man of any sect shews in suffering, then the opinion and persuasion of no sect can be truer or surer than that of the Anabaptists; since there have been none for these twelve hundred years past that have been more grievously punished, or have more cheerfully and stedfastly undergone, and even offered themselves to the most cruel sorts of punishment, than these people."—"The Anabaptists are a pernicious sect, of which kind the Waldesian brethren seem to have been.—Nor is this heresy a modern thing for it existed in the time of Austin."—In Rees' *Reply to Walker*, p. 211. Here we find one of the most cruel enemies of the baptists acknowledging their existence from the time of Austin, and the cheerfulness with which they suffered in the cause of religion. If this be true, what becomes of the assertion that none could be found who denied infant baptism for 750 years.

Dr. Mosheim—"The true origin of that sect which acquired the denomination of Anabaptists, by their administering a new rite of baptism to those who came over to their communion, and derived that of Mennonites, from the famous man to whom they owe the greatest part of their present felicity, is hid in the remotest depths of antiquity, and is of consequence extremely difficult to be ascertained."—*Eccles. His.* vol. 4. p. 439.

From these witnesses, and from the New Testament, I think it may be fairly inferred that the origin of this pernicious sect is to be found among that people who were every where spoken against, and who began with the baptism of John. You inform us that when one sect of the Waldenses declared against the baptizing of infants, as being incapable of salvation, the main body of that people rejected their opinion, and they soon dwindled away.

That the Waldenses were generally baptised is a point generally admitted by those who are acquainted with their history; but that they believed infants were incapable of salvation is, I believe, no more than a calumny raised against them by their enemies. This is an accusation frequently brought against those who deny infant baptism. In the year 1690, in England, one Collias, a baptist minister, printed a pamphlet against infant baptism, in which he observed "there was no reason to baptize an infant under the pretence of saving him, for that original sin was not washed off by

baptismal water, but by the blood of Christ." A minister who held to infant baptism, both preached and printed that this was *infant damning doctrine*; and so great was the clamour raised on this occasion, that when Collins walked the street, the people would exclaim, There goes Collins, who holds the damnation of infants. Thus also you tell us, that "our reasoning brings in its train all the horrors of infant damnation." It appears to me that this is partly the result of prejudice, and partly for want of better arguments. You conclude by observing, that whenever an opponent of infant baptism made his appearance in the primitive church, he had always to oppose the tide of custom; and that even so late as the sixteenth century they would not have been able to form a party sufficiently strong to attract the attention of the world or the church. It appears to me that this argument would be much more consistent from a member of the church of Rome, than from a protestant, who professes to believe the Bible to be the standard of the christian's faith and practice. Would not this argument condemn John Huss and Jerom of Prague, as well as the baptists: they certainly preached unpopular doctrines, and were burnt for it by the council of Constance. But there is one thing more I would observe from Ecclesiastical History, which entirely does away with your arguments from this source, viz. The practice of infant communion. It appears that at an early period of christianity it was believed that baptism and the Lord's supper were essential to salvation; this led to administering both those ordinances to infants. To prove this I shall make a few extracts. *Salmasius and Suicerus*—"Because the eucharist was given to adult catechumens when they were washed with holy baptism, without any space of time intervening: this also was done to infants *after pedobaptism was introduced*."—Judson, p. 38.

Dr. Priestly—"It is remarkable that in all christian antiquity, we always find that communion in the Lord's Supper immediately followed baptism; and no such thing occurs as that of any person having a right to one of these ordinances and not the other."—Address on giving the Lord's Supper to children.

The History of the Church, written by an impartial hand, says, "In the time of Cyprian (254) it was usual for children and sucking infants to receive the sacrament. And therefore when a little sucking girl refused to taste the sacramental wine, the deacon violently forced it down her throat."—Page 112. As I presume you will admit that infant communion is a human invention, what reason can be given why infant baptism is not so also? These two practices were found existing together in ancient times; they were supported by the same arguments; and what reason can be given why they should not be laid aside together. Every argument made use of in support of infant baptism, will operate with equal force in favour of infant communion.

The remainder of your second letter is taken up in proving that it is wrong to rebaptize. In answer to this I would observe, that

we do not believe infants to be capable of making a public profession of christianity; neither do we believe sprinkling to be baptism. If you can make it appear that we are mistaken in these points, we will cheerfully give up our present practice; but till then, whether it be better to obey God or men, judge you.
I remain, &c.

—o—
LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING weighed your arguments in favour of infant baptism in the balances of the sanctuary, and found them wanting, I shall state our objections against the practice. The first is, that we find such things required in Scripture as qualifications for baptism as cannot be discovered in infants, viz. repentance and faith. The baptism of John was termed the baptism of repentance, because he required a profession of repentance, and fruits meet for it in those whom he baptized. "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham;"—Mat. 3, 5—9. John appears here to require a personal profession of repentance, and fruits answerable thereto, in order to baptism; and he denies that they could have a hereditary right to it by a descent from Abraham. This seems to show a great difference between circumcision and baptism. A descent from Abraham was the very thing that entitled to circumcision, and all the privileges of the Jewish church. But John declares that the kingdom of heaven, which was then at hand, required other qualifications, viz. repentance and faith in coming to the Saviour. For John told them they must believe on him who should come after him; that is, on Christ Jesus.—See Acts 19, 4. Now if a descent from Abraham would not entitle to a standing in the gospel church, who will say a descent from any believer will? We find Peter also on the day of Pentecost insisting on the same thing—"Repent and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins." Again we find when the eunuch asked, "What doth hinder me to be baptized; the answer was, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." We never find the Scriptures making any exceptions in favour of infants. Is it not then a fair conclusion that we ought not to baptize any who cannot manifest faith and repentance. Again, we find baptism termed "the answer of a good conscience towards God."—1 Pet. 3, 21. Can it be so termed when administered to an infant. Further, in all the baptisms recorded in

Scripture, we find no mention of the baptism of an infant, or of an adult who did not profess faith. From the beginning of John's ministry till our Lord's death, we have no account of the baptism of any infants. On the day of pentecost, it is said, as many as received the word gladly were baptized; and the same day there were 3000 added to them. These 3000 must have had a great number of children. If these were all baptized on the faith of their parents, is it not surprising that it should be passed over in silence. Again, we are told, Acts 4, that the number of them who believed was 5000; still there is no mention of infants. In Acts 5, we are told that multitudes of believers were added to the Lord, both men and women. Yet in all these instances no mention is made of infant baptism. We know this is not the case where pedobaptist missionaries travel and baptize. In their Journals they generally note how many infants, and how many adults, they have baptized. Is it not surprising that the sacred historian should have been less correct than modern missionaries are, if indeed infants were then baptized as now? The 8th chap. of Acts gives us an account of the introduction of the gospel into Samaria, and its effects; that when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women." If infant baptism be one of the things of the kingdom of God, we would naturally suppose that Philip would have preached it, and that the effect would follow in the baptism of children as well as men and women. But as this is not mentioned, what is the natural inference but that "they had no such custom, neither the churches of God." Acts 18, 9, informs us of Paul's preaching at Corinth and that many of the Corinthians hearing *believed and were baptized.*" The Acts of the apostles contains a brief history of the church for about 30 years after the death of our Lord, and in particular it mentions the planting of many churches and the materials of which they were composed, viz. "those who received the word gladly, and multitudes of believers both men and women." If the infants of all these persons were baptized, can any person tell us why it is passed over in total silence. I will mention one place in which it appears to me certain that if infant baptism had been in use, it would have been mentioned. In Acts 21, we find the believing Jews had imbibed a prejudice against Paul, because he had persuaded the Jews who were among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and not to circumcise their children. To do away with this prejudice Paul was advised to join those men who had a vow on them, and to purify himself, &c. Now had infant baptism been then in use, and been considered as a substitute for circumcision, how easily could Paul have cleared himself. Would he not have said,—“Brethren, you know infant baptism has come in the place of circumcision, and though I have taught them not to circumcise their children; yet I have baptized them instead of it. You know baptism is only circumcision in a new shape.” Further, if these Jews were of-

ended with Paul for dissuading others from circumcising their children, it is a very natural inference that they circumcised their own; and can we reasonably believe that they would both circumcise and baptize their children. To sum up the whole, it does not appear from Scripture or from any authentic history, that our Lord ever commanded an infant to be baptized, or that there ever was one baptized by John the baptist, our Lord, or his apostles, or by any christian for 150 years after the death of our Lord. If this be not a sufficient reason for rejecting infant baptism, I do not know what would be. You insist that we should bring some Scripture forbidding infant baptism. But how absurd is such a requirement! If it could be proved that our Lord or his apostles ever brought an infant into the gospel church, or that they ever had a right to it; then it would be necessary to shew when that right was abrogated. You observe that as it regards absolute certainty, the opponents and the advocates of infant baptism are exactly on a level. For the Scriptures contain no express declarations for or against the practice." It appears to me that this concession is almost equivalent to giving up the point altogether. If it cannot be proved by precept or example from Scripture, it must of course fall to the ground. There is no express declaration of Scripture for or against infant communion; yet I presume you would not say the advocates and the opponents of that practice are exactly on a level.

But we have another objection against infant baptism, viz. That it destroys the distinction which the New Testament makes between the church and the world. Our Lord said to his disciples, "Ye are not of the world; but I have chosen you out of the world." And he declares that "his kingdom is not of this world." All the churches of which we read in the New Testament were composed of professed believers, and are addressed as such. And when Annanias and Sapphira joined the church at Jerusalem, they were struck dead to shew the Lord's detestation of hypocrisy, and to deter others who were in a like state from joining them; and it had this effect "of the rest. (viz. of hypocrites and unbelievers) durst no man join himself to them;" and the disciples of Christ are thus addressed; "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." It appears also that they exercised a discipline among themselves. They were censured for going to law before the unjust, and not having their differences adjusted by their brethren. They had a particular direction from our Lord how to treat an offending brother, and when to exclude him from their communion. They were separated from the world, and united to each other by the strongest ties; having "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." But it is evident that infant baptism has a tendency to destroy this state of things, and to bring into the church the whole population of the land. Let us suppose a church to be composed of a number of believers, and that they

bring all their children into the church. The consequence will be that the church will increase with the gradual increase of their families, and in a few years the parents will have gone the way of all flesh, and their children will have occupied their places; but perhaps not one-fourth of their children are true believers. The power will then be in the hands of the majority who know not God, and obey not his gospel. We see it to be so, not only in religious, but literary societies. If any learned society were to admit all their children as members of the society, it would soon fall into contempt, because the children would not inherit the talents of the parents; and experience shews that piety is not hereditary, any more than genius or talents. Every church then, which practises infant baptism, and acts consistently with it, carries in its own bosom the seeds of dissolution, and is paving the way, or reducing the church into a mere worldly society, in which there may be indeed some pious persons, but in which mere nominal christians will be the majority. But you will perhaps reply, We guard against this, for though we baptize our children, yet we do not admit them to the Lord's Supper, nor consider them as in full communion till they exhibit symptoms of piety. I answer, this shews the inconsistency of infant baptism in a very striking light: for if baptism be the door into the visible church of Christ, and infants are fit subjects of that ordinance, they have a right to all the privileges of the house of God. Those who practise infant baptism then ought either to give it up or to revive the practice of infant communion, or to shew why they separate these ordinances. But we have another objection to infant baptism, viz. That it has a tendency to injure those who have been the subjects of it, by supporting that principle of self-righteousness which is so natural to fallen man. You represent Dr. Dwight as addressing the children who have been baptized in infancy in these terms: "God has called you my young friends into his visible kingdom in the morning of life. He has publicly sealed you as his children, and planted you in the nursery of his church, &c." Do you think, sir, that this is the language of truth and soberness, or that the Apostles would address unregenerate persons in this way? Do you not think it would be more scriptural and profitable to tell them that they possessed depraved natures, and that they were under the influence of a carnal mind, which was enmity against God; and to tell them that unless they were born again, they could not enter into the kingdom of God. You suppose that infant baptism has an advantage over adult, because it furnishes the parent with motives to urge the child to a life of obedience to God. You take no notice of faith and repentance. I should suppose that without these no person, old or young, could live a life of obedience to God. In short, baptism supposes the person to be already in a state of favour and acceptance with God; and to be consistent, those who practise infant baptism must suppose all their children to be in the way that leads to life, and that they

have only to go on in it : which is in my opinion a false and dangerous supposition. What argument can any person use to urge persons to faith and repentance, more powerful than the love of God in giving his Son to die for sinners. Paul knew of none, he says. " God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." And in consequence of which, he, as an ambassador for Christ, besought men to be reconciled to God. This is an argument that every pious person may use with his children. What privilege then have the children of a pious pedobaptist, over those of a pious baptist? The children of a pious baptist have the advantage of his prayers, instructions, and example, and of the preaching of the gospel; and whenever they believe in the Lord Jesus with all their hearts, the doors of the church are wide open to receive them. They have the privilege of following their Lord and Master into the liquid grave; and thus publicly taking up their cross, and acknowledging themselves to be on the Lord's side. But for a pious pedobaptist to tell his children that God has publicly sealed them as his children, is both erroneous and dangerous. It is erroneous, because we read of no person's being sealed as the children of God, but those who were sealed by the Spirit of God to the day of redemption : and I presume no person will say this means baptism. It is dangerous, because it leads such persons to think themselves in a better state than others, which is directly contrary to the spirit of the gospel, which requires the sinner to be stripped of every self-justifying plea, and to come to Christ as perishing and helpless for life and salvation. But again, it is an injury to such persons, because it has a tendency to prevent them from publicly confessing Christ before men, when they are converted to God. It is frequently the case where revivals of religion take place, that the young converts see their duty " to be buried with Christ in baptism" plainly; but they are told by their parents, " We have dedicated you to God in infancy; will you profane the name of the Trinity by renouncing your baptism, and by being rebaptized by these enthusiastical people?" Thus some are kept in bondage by this reasoning all their lives, and prevented from acting according to the dictates of their own conscience and the word of God. Some compromise the matter, and are immersed in the name of the Trinity, by a person who never was immersed himself, and who does not believe in it as the scriptural mode of baptism. While those who do come out and follow the dictates of conscience and the word of God holdly, have generally to encounter the frowns of friends and relatives. I have here laid before you the principal reasons why we reject infant baptism; whether they will be sufficient to justify us in your opinion, or to bring you over to us, I know not. Praying that we may be taught by the word and Spirit of God, and led in the right way in principle and practice.

I remain, &c.

LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

THE purport of your third letter is to prove that sprinkling and pouring are legitimate modes of administering the ordinance of baptism. As your arguments have not satisfied me of the truth of this, I shall give my reasons for dissenting from you on this subject. Your principal argument is, that the word baptize and its derivatives, which are used to express the action of baptism, primarily mean to cleanse. The only authority which you bring for this use of the word is Dr. Dwight. It appears to me that the Doctor is very unhappy in his choice of a proof of this meaning of the word. He observes that the word originally meant to dye, tinge, stain, or colour. But the question is, if it originally meant to tinge or dye, how comes it now to mean to cleanse, which is the very opposite of dying. To dye signifies to communicate a stain, to cleanse signifies to take out a stain. Between dying and cleansing there is no resemblance; but between dying and immersion there is a very striking one; for whatever is dyed is immersed in the liquid for that purpose. From this then I think every candid person will conclude that to baptize is to immerse.

Your next argument is, that it is sometimes used in Scripture where it cannot be translated immersion. You instance the following passage, Mark 7, 4, "where we read of the baptisms (so it is in the original) of pots, and cups, and tables or beds:" and you think no one will maintain that these were dipped in order to be cleansed. But I think you will find those who are most conversant with Jewish customs of opinion, that these baptisms were literal immersions, and might have been so rendered by our translators. By referring to Lev. 11, 32, you will find that all vessels which were defiled, were to be put into water or immersed. Their tables were not like ours, but they were couches or beds on which they leaned while at their meals; and they were washed by being put into water. Dr. Gill on this text says, "The Jewish canon ran thus, a bed that is wholly defiled, if he dip it, part by part, is pure. See also Stackhouse' Hist. of the Bible, p. 12 34. You also mention that when the Jews returned from the market except they washed (Greek, baptized) their hands they ate not. That this washing of their hands, and even their whole bodies, was by immersion, there are many evidences.

Scaliger—"The more superstitious part of the Jews, every day before they sat down to meat, dipped the whole body. Hence the Pharisees' admiration at Christ; Luke 11, 38. Judson, p. 7. Dr. Pocock says concerning this baptizing their hands; "The greatest and most notorious uncleanness of the hands reached but to the perch or wrist, and was cleansed by dipping or immersing them up so high." Dr. Hammond on this text says, "Washing of any part, as the hands here, by way of immersion in water, as that is opposed to effusion or pouring water on them."—Gale p. 158.

From these witnesses, and a number of others that might be adduced, it appears that these baptisms were literal immersions, and therefore prove that we understand the word correctly. It must be remembered they were traditions of the Jewish elders, and therefore were something more than the law required; hence the practice of Elijah having water poured on his hands, for the purpose of cleanliness, has nothing to do with these superstitious washings or immersions which our Lord censured. The next instance you bring is Heb. 9. 10, where our translators have it, Divers washings; Greek Divers baptisms. Had there been no immersions under the law, there would be some force in this objection; but as we know there is a variety of persons and things to be immersed on different occasions, (See Lev. 11, 30, 31, 32, and Num. 31, 21, 22, 23,) this application of the word affords no reason for ascribing to it any other, besides its usual import. Grotius, Whitby, and M-Knight, all eminent critics, and all pedobaptists, are of opinion that these words should be translated *divers immersions*.

Your next argument in favour of sprinkling is drawn from the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea. Paul says, 1 Cor. 10, 1, 2. Moreover, brethren, I would not have you ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Dr. Dwight insists on it that this baptism was accomplished by a heavy rain which was poured forth upon the Israelites by the pillar of cloud and fire, when it passed over them from van to rear, in order to defend them from the Egyptians.— Other pedobaptists are equally sure that they were baptized by the spray of the sea, which sprinkled them. It appears to me that both those conjectures are mere fictions invented to serve a turn, and will be burnt up at the last day with a great deal more wood, hay, and stubble, which have been brought forward to prove that sprinkling is baptism. I think a perusal of the chapter out of which these words are taken, will convince any candid person that the apostle did not mean that they were literally baptized, but they passed through something that was figurative of baptism; for he says in the following verse, that the rock in the wilderness was Christ. He certainly means no more by that expression than that the rock was figurative of Christ. So in saying the Israelites were baptized in the cloud and in the sea, he meant that by going down into the sea as into a grave, they were figuratively immersed or buried in it; and when they emerged out of it, it resembled a resurrection; and so when under the cloud they might be said to be buried or immersed in it. Dr. Clarke's comment on 1 Pet. 3, 21, he endeavours to prove, that sprinkling is baptism because Noah and those with him are said to be saved by water, and that salvation was typical of baptism, and he contends that the way they were baptized, was by the rain sprinkling the ark. Now we know that whether it was by sprinkling or immer-

tion in strict propriety of speech, the ark only was baptized, the water did not touch the inhabitants. So in passing through the sea they might be said to be baptized without the water touching them. The celebrated Witsius, in commenting on this passage, says, "How were the Israelites baptized in the cloud and in the sea, seeing they were neither immersed in the sea nor washed in the cloud? It is to be considered that the apostle here uses the term baptism in a figurative sense. The clouds hung over their heads, and so the water is over those who are baptized.—The sea surrounded them on each side, and so the water in regard to those that are baptized."—See Judson on baptism, p. 8. He also quotes the following persons as giving the same comment:—Turretinus, Knatchbull, Grotius, Braamius, Gataker, Camero, Bengelius, Marekius, Tool, Hammond and Whitby.

You say at the conclusion of this argument. "It follows then St. Paul being the Judge that to be sprinkled is to be baptized." But how could you say so? Paul says no such thing; it is only Dr. Dwight says so, you also argue from the pouring out of the spirit upon the apostles being termed a baptism, that pouring is baptism. But, my dear sir, you must know the difference between a word being used literally and figuratively. When we say a person is drowned in the water, we mean that he is suffocated in it, and this is the primary and literal meaning of the word; but when we say a person is drowned in tears, we use the word in a figurative and improper sense. You must admit according to the meaning you attach to the word, that it is used figuratively, when the pouring out of the spirit is called baptism. You contend that it means to cleanse or wash. I presume you will not say, the apostles were literally washed or cleansed in the spirit, when poured out upon them. Yet when the sound which was the symbol of the Divine Spirit filled all the house where the disciples were sitting, it bore striking resemblance to literal baptism. Abp. Tillotson, in commenting on this event, says, "*It filled all the house.*" This is that which our saviour calls *baptizing with the Holy Ghost*. So that they who sat in the house were as they were *immersed* in the Holy Ghost, as they who were buried in water, were overwhelmed or covered all over with water, which is the proper notion of baptism." Sermon 197. The following writers are also quoted by Mr. Judson as agreeing with the above: Cyril, Gundlerus, Ikenius, Le Clerc, Casaubon, Leigh, Bp. Hopkins and Bp. Reynolds. Thus we see that many eminent writers, who were not baptists, consider these figurative baptisms as having an evident allusion to immersion in water, and thus confirm us in the opinion that baptism and immersion are terms of the same import.

Your next argument in favour of sprinkling is derived from the circumstance that there are many baptisms recorded in scripture, when there is no mention of there being *much water* there, and as you suppose water could not be found to immerse them, you conclude they were sprinkled. You observe that Luke had his rea-

sons for not informing us that the 3000 disciples on the day of pentecost, Saul of Tarsus, Cornelius, &c. went down into, or to, the water, and that these reasons are not very favourable to the doctrine of immersion. What do you think, dear sir, could have been the reason; I hope you did not suspect him to have been a baptist, who would particularly mention the circumstance when they went down into, and came up out of, the water; but when there was not water enough for immersion would wish to pass hastily over it without mentioning the mode. I cannot suppose that he would have concealed the circumstance from us, or have passed it over in haste. If the candidates were sprinkled, I think the historian would have told us so plainly. If I am rightly informed there are words suitable to express the actions of pouring and sprinkling in the Greek language; and if the 3000 or any other persons had water poured or sprinkled on them for baptism, what reason can be given why the scripture does not employ these words? In the Greek translation of Lev. 9, 6, 8, The three terms are all used in the following manner:—"And the priest shall (*bapsei*) dip his finger in the blood, and (*prostranei*) sprinkle of the blood seven times before the Lord, and shall (*elechei*) pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar." Here we find the three words to express baptizing, pouring and sprinkling, are very different in the original, and are translated by three different words.—See Baldwin on baptism p. 91. We see also from this text that to baptize does not mean to wash or cleanse; for the priest did not wash or cleanse his finger in the blood, but he *dipped* it for the purpose of taking up the blood on his finger to sprinkle it before the Lord.—In short sir, I think when the scripture says the 3000 were *baptized*, it is favourable to the doctrine of immersion, and so in every other instance. It does not appear to me, that the scripture ever mentions the circumstances connected with baptism, for the sake of shewing us what baptism is. The meaning of the word baptize was certainly well known as it was a word in common use. The circumstances connected with baptism, are merely mentioned incidentally. It is certainly not necessary then in order to prove that baptism is immersion, that it should be always mentioned that there was much water or that they went down into, and came up out of, the water. The circumstances which you suppose to be unfavourable to immersion in the case of the 3000 are, 1st. that there would not be time to immerse 3000 in one day. I would observe that it is not said they were all baptized in one day. The words are "and as many as received the word gladly were baptized; and the same day there were added to them about 3000 souls."—Now I am not sure, neither are you, that they were all baptized the same day. They might be added to them by professing to receive their word, and joining themselves to their company and yet not be baptized on the same day. We read Acts 9, 26; that when Paul came up to Jerusalem after his conversion "He is said to *join* himself to the disciples of Jesus, but that they were

all afraid of him, and did not believe he was a disciple." Now his joining himself to the disciples was equivalent to the 3000 being added to them. Yet it did not mean being baptized, for he had been baptized at Damascus; but it meant his publicly uniting himself with the disciples, and avowing their sentiments &c. But admitting that they were all baptized on the same day, I think there would be no want of time. We read that the number of the disciples who were together previous to the day of pentecost was 120. The 70 disciples whom our Lord had sent out to preach, and the 12 apostles were no doubt of this number. If 50 persons were employed in baptizing, it would be but 60 each. To prove to you that this would be easily done, I shall mention a circumstance which took place a few years ago in the United States:—Mr. Daniel Merrill, the pastor of a pedobaptist church in Sedgewick, Maine, embraced the doctrine of believers baptism, and preached on the subject to his people; the result was, that the baptist minister was invited to bury a number of them with their Lord in baptism; and 66 persons were immersed in the space of 40 minutes. This proves that it would be no great difficulty to immerse 3000 in one day, where there were so many administrators.

The next obstacle which you find is a want of water. In reply to this I would observe, that there were in the temple at Jerusalem the molten sea, and a number of lavers of brass for the dipping of the priests. There was also the pool of Bethesda, and that of Siloam, where persons bathed and dipped themselves on certain occasions; John 5, 1. We must also remember that the Jews were in the constant practice of immersing themselves on religious accounts, and therefore would have many conveniencies for that purpose in so large a city as Jerusalem. Maimorides, a learned Jewish Rabbi, says, "Wherever in the law, washing of the flesh or of the clothes is mentioned, it means nothing else than the dipping of the whole body in a laver; for if any man dips himself all over except the tip of his little finger, he is still in his uncleanness." Judson, p. 7. Mr. Foot also remarks; "We who are so little used to washing the whole body, either in a common or religious way, are apt to wonder where and how such prodigious numbers as are mentioned in the New Testament to be baptized, could be accommodated, if they were immersed in water. But it needs only to be considered that the principal scene of baptism lay in a country where immersion was quite familiar, and most by the very laws of their religion come into daily use through all parts of the land, and then the wonder will cease. For, as bishop Patrick observes, (Com. on Lev. 15, 12,) there are so many washings prescribed (in the law of Moses) that it is reasonable to believe there were not only at Jerusalem, and in all other cities; but in every village several bathing places, contrived for these legal purifications, that men might without much labour, be able to fulfil these precepts."—Foot's letters to bishop Hoadly, p. 29.

It appears that at first the disciples were not excluded from the

temple or public bathing-places; but they had favour with all the people: hence I think they would find a place or places sufficient for immersing all the disciples in Jerusalem or its vicinity. The next obstacle that you find in the way of immersion is, that the persons baptized would come without a change of clothes; and you think to immerse them with their clothes on would expose them to certain disease and death. One would almost suppose by the horror which you entertain of water, that you had caught the hydrophobia. But I apprehend the primitive disciples were not so much alarmed at it. Do you suppose that in a country so warm as Judea, and in the warmest season of the year, and among a people who were constantly in the habit of bathing, that there would be any danger of disease and death from a want of change of clothes after immersion? If you do, I think very few will. You inform us from Dr. Dwight that the manner in which the Israelites were baptized in the Red Sea, was by a rain which the clouds poured forth upon them. If that were the case, men, women, and children must have been all wet; and I think in such circumstances they could not change their clothes. Yet you see no danger of disease and death in their remaining all night in their wet clothes. But in the case of the 3000; they could not be immersed and stand in wet clothes; it would subject them to certain disease and death. Oh prejudice, how strong an influence dost thou exert over the hearts of men! The next case I shall notice is that of the jailer and his family. You observe that you think it evident that they were never out of the prison walls; and you inquire where a water sufficiently deep for their immersion could be found at midnight? In reply to this, I shall quote a passage from Judson's Sermon on Christian Baptism, preached at Calcutta. Mr. Judson was a missionary sent out to the East, by a pedobaptist society in America. On his passage out he reviewed the subject of baptism, previous to engaging in a mission among the heathen; and the result was, he was obliged to give up infant sprinkling, and become a baptist. After stating the same objection which you bring against the immersion of the jailer and his family, he thus proceeds: "This case can present no difficulty to the minds of any of you, my brethren, who may have been within the yard of the prison in this city, (Calcutta) or are acquainted with the fact that prison yards in the East, as well as the yards and gardens of private houses, are usually furnished with tanks, viz. cisterns of water." p. 7. The fact is that the objections that are brought against immersion from these cases, arise from the supposition that the habits and manners of the East are similar to ours. But an acquaintance with the history of that country removes all these objections at once. If there were cisterns of water in the prison yards, and in the yards and gardens of private houses generally in the East, there would be no difficulty in finding a suitable place for the immersion of the jailer and his family, and all others mentioned in Scripture. In the case of the baptism of

the Eunuch, you are at much pains to prove that the water in which he was baptized, was not more than ankle deep. This attempt to set aside immersion appears to me to display more zeal than good policy. On this case I shall make a quotation from Dr. Wall.—“That immersion was the practice of the primitive church is so plain and clear, by an infinite number of passages, that one cannot but pity the weak endeavours of such pedobaptists as would maintain the negative of it.—It is a great want of prudence as well as honesty to refuse to grant to an adversary what is certainly true, and may be proved so.—It creates a jealousy of all the rest that one says.”—His. of In. Bap. Part 2, p. 462.

I had some hopes that I should be able to remove your objections, and bring you over to our side; but when I read your observations on this case, I am almost compelled to give it up. For when Luke says nothing of their going down into the water, or coming up out of it, you think that a decisive proof against immersion. And when he says they came to a certain water, and both went down into it, and came up out of it, you will not allow it any weight in favour of immersion, because he has not told us what water it was, nor how deep it was. I suppose it would be difficult, if not impossible, to determine with certainty where it was, or how deep was the water; but I will mention the opinion of one or two. Jerome, who wrote on the spot, describes the town of Bethsoron, and mentions the fountain in it, in which he saith, “the Acts of the Apostles relate that the Eunuch of Queen Candace was baptized here by Philip.”—Baldwin on baptism, p. 82.

Borchardus is of opinion that it was “Nehel Escol, that is, the Brook of the Cluster, from whence the spies carried the grapes. To the left of this valley, for the space of a mile, runs a river in which Philip baptized the Eunuch of Queen Candace, not far from Sicelech.”—See Dr. Gill on this text.

Another argument which you bring in favour of pouring and sprinkling is, that as baptism is symbolical of our interest in the blood of Christ, and the sanctifying influences of his Spirit, and the application of these blessings to us being frequently spoken of under the idea of sprinkling and pouring; you infer these are the most proper signs of the thing signified. I should think that he who instituted baptism was the best judge of what was most proper to signify to us the blessings of his grace; and I should think the meaning of the word baptism, and the circumstances connected with it, would be the best means of enabling us to ascertain what baptism is, and not the figurative language of prophesy; where baptism is not at all alluded to. Among the prophetic passages which you have brought to prove that pouring and sprinkling are baptism, I find the following: “And I will put my Spirit within you.” What are we to infer from this that drinking is baptism! Drinking is the only method that I know of to put water within us; and it is just as good a proof that drinking is baptism, as your other quotations are that pouring and sprinkling

are baptism. I should think a moment's reflection on this would convince you of the absurdity of resorting to such passages to find out what baptism is. You observe that immersion has not one spiritual expression to keep it in countenance. I would observe that immersion does not stand in need of any thing to keep it in countenance. The command and example of our Lord and his Apostles, and all the primitive christians, are quite sufficient. But sprinkling and pouring stand in need of a variety of arguments to keep them in countenance, because the command and example of our Lord and his Apostles frown upon them. But it appears to me you were very forgetful, when you stated that immersion had no spiritual expressions to sanction it.—Paul says, Rom. 6, 4. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Here is a passage which clearly alludes to immersion, as representing the believer's communion with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. You also observe that we never read of being immersed in the influences of the Spirit or the blood of Christ. But I think we read of something very like immersion in the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of pentecost. It is said the sound, which was a symbol of the Spirit, filled all the house where they were sitting. This I think looks very like alluding to immersion; and in Zech. 13, 1, we find the blood of Christ compared to a fountain opened; and we know the method of using a fountain is by plunging or immersing in it. Hence an evangelical poet sweetly sings:

There is a fountain filled with blood
 Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
 Lose all their guilty stains.

And another:—

Is he a fountain? there I'll bathe,
 And heal the plagues of sin and death.

Do not, my dear sir, in your zeal for sprinkling, attempt to close that fountain, which baptismal waters represent, and which all the redeemed of the Lord celebrate when they sing, "Unto him who loved us and gave himself for us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Another objection which you bring from Dr. Dwight is, that immersion is indecent, and ought to be given up on that ground. It moves me, more perhaps than it ought, to see such a charge as this brought against an institution of our Lord. After he has made use of all the learned sophistry which he can bring against immersion, fearing he has not accomplished his purpose, he represents it as indecent and immodest. In reply to this I would only observe the charge falls not against us, but against the institution. We are well satisfied that when our Lord gave command

to baptise, he meant to immerse, and that he and his Apostles were immersed; and the multitudes of primitive believers, both men and women, were immersed. It appears to me that such charges manifest nothing but the most inveterate prejudice. I think the Lord Jesus possessed as great purity as Dr. Dwight; yet he commanded and practised immersion.

Your last argument in favour of sprinkling is in the words of the more amiable and candid Doddridge. He says, "As some who insist on immersion allow of a change in some circumstances as to the administration of the eucharist, both as to time and gesture; and the form of the elements; we may on the same principles allow of some variation here from what was generally practised at first, especially as the coldness of the climate and the general disuse of bathing among us, seem to require it, and it is in the very nature of our religion to require mercy rather than sacrifice. We are willing to admit that some circumstances connected with the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, may be varied without departing from the design of the institution. But we also believe there is something essential to both these ordinances which cannot be given up without departing from the design of the institution. The principal design of the Lord's Supper appears to be to commemorate the sufferings and death of Immanuel, and to represent his broken body and shed blood as the spiritual food of his disciples. Hence it appears to be essential, that bread should be broken and distributed among the disciples, and wine poured out and distributed, to represent the broken body and shed blood of our Redeemer. Yet this may be done, and some circumstances differ from those attending the first celebration of this ordinance. When our Lord first administered this ordinance to his disciples, it was evening; the bread used was in all probability, unleavened bread; and the disciples were in a reclining posture, as the custom was while at meat. Yet none of these things are essential to this ordinance. While we imitate our Lord in blessing the elements, in breaking the bread and pouring the wine, and distributing and receiving them in remembrance of his dying love, we rightly administer and receive this ordinance. Whatever may be the time of the day, the kind or quantity of the bread and wine, or the posture of the body. But if we deny the cup to the disciples, and if we give a whole wafer without breaking it to each communicant, we do not obey our Lord's command; and there is no memorial of his broken body and shed blood, and in fact it is not the same ordinance.

Baptism is intended to be a sign of regeneration, or that the person baptized is born of the Spirit. Hence these two are frequently connected in Scripture—"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3, 5, and Tit. 3, 5. "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing (or laver) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

2. It represents to the repenting believer, the remission or washing away of his sins in the blood of Christ. Thus Peter exhorted the convicted Jews "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins."— And Annanias thus exhorted Paul:—"And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

3. It represents the washing away of the filth or pollution of sin, both from the heart and future life of a christian by the word and spirit of God; Eph. 5, 25, 26; "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word."

4. It exhibits the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, whereby he fulfilled all righteousness, together with the Christian's communion with and conformity to him therein. This the apostle expressly declares, and chiefly insists upon "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized unto his death. Therefore, we are buried with him, by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father; even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Now baptism to be rightly administered, must represent these things. The two principal things are, a washing, and a death, burial, and a resurrection. Immersion completely represents these things. It is the most complete, and indeed the only way of washing, and it also represents a death, burial and resurrection; but sprinkling, and pouring, are very imperfect figures of washing; and they do not at all represent our communion with, and conformity to our Lord, in his death, burial and resurrection. Hence we conceive, that immersion, and immersion alone, is christian baptism. At the same time, we admit that circumstances may vary, in the administration of this ordinance. Whether it be administered by day, or by night, in salt water or fresh; whether there be many, or few spectators; whether it be on the Lord's day or not; whether it be administered in the sea, or in a river, pond, lake, or cistern; or whether it be administered by one immersion, or three, we do not think to be essential. But we do believe immersion to be essential, or in other words we believe baptism and immersion to be words of exactly the same import. We contend that pouring and sprinkling, are different rites, expressed by different words, and performed in a different way, and consequently not baptism.

We also deny that any man, or body of men, on earth; have power to alter any institution given by our Lord, on any pretence whatever. We do not conceive that the apostles had power to alter any of our Lord's commands. He commanded them to teach the disciples, who should be converted by their ministry, to observe all things, whatever he had commanded them. It was on this principle, that the church had power to alter and amend the

ordinances of the gospel; that so much corruption and superstition, crept in among professing christians. If we once admit, that the church has power to alter one of God's commands; where will it stop. If she has power to alter one, she has power to alter all; and to add, and diminish, as she thinks proper.

In cases of real necessity, it is right to omit those things which cannot consistently be done; and there the rule will take place "God will have mercy and not sacrifice." But it never can be right for us to alter a positive institution on any pretence whatever. God commanded the Jews to circumcise their male children on the eighth day, but it appears it was neglected for 40 years, while in the wilderness; and they were not censured for it, because they could not consistently perform this rite, while travelling from place to place. But if they had substituted some other rite, instead of circumcision, would God have accepted it at their hands? So in the case of baptism, God has made it the duty of every believer, to be baptized; but if any are placed in such circumstances that they cannot do it, he will have mercy, and not sacrifice. Thus in the case of the thief, when he believed, he was in such circumstances that he could not be baptized, it was not required of him; but we do not find the Saviour providing sprinkling as a substitute for baptism in his case. So in our case, God requires every believer to be baptized; but if our climate is so cold for a part of the year, as to render baptism dangerous, let it be deferred till a suitable time; in such a case God will have mercy, and not sacrifice; but it can be no reason for our altering a divine institution, as God has now here given us permission so to do.

Your concluding quotation from Dr. Clarke, does not appear to me, to possess by any means; that critical accuracy, which you claim for it. Peter says after speaking of the souls who were saved by water in the ark "The like figure whereunto, or the antitype of which even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The apostle here teaches us, that baptism saves us, by shewing how we are to obtain a good conscience towards God, viz. by the death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I think it will be admitted by every one who is acquainted with the gospel way of salvation, that the only way in which a guilty conscience is pacified, and to have a good conscience towards God, is by the death of Christ for our sins, and his resurrection for our justification. This is represented, and applied to every true believer in baptism. But the Dr. takes no notice at all of this, but ascribes the good conscience entirely to the operations of the Holy Spirit, typified by baptism. I think we should not so insist upon the operations of the Holy Spirit, as to neglect the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; as it is said "his blood cleanseth from all sin." I admit, that it is the Holy Spirit that leads us to the Saviour, but it is the death and resurrection of Jesus received by faith, which gives the guilty

conscience peace. I think this is a great reason why so many do not see the necessity of immersion, viz. they view baptism, as merely typical of the influences of the spirit; hence, they think, if water be applied, no matter how. But, I would further observe, I think the Dr. makes another mistake, in supposing that the rain which fell on the ark, was what saved its inhabitants. It was certainly the flood underneath, and around the ark, which saved its inhabitants, by lifting up the ark, and preventing it from being dashed against the rock. When the Dr. says, the ark was not immersed in the water; it is only true in part. This huge vessel, with the enormous weight of men, animals, and provisions, which it contained, must have sunk in the water nearly to the top; and probably, the billows would sometimes roll over it. The way in which the salvation of the inhabitants of the ark, typified baptism, was this:—They were figuratively buried in the ark, and in the water for a time, and they then emerged from confinement, which was a kind of resurrection; and thus the believer is buried in baptismal water, and rises again to newness of life, in imitation of, and communion with, his Lord and Master. Hoping that however, we may differ in our explication of this text, we may both possess a good conscience towards God, and be the means of turning many to righteousness,

I remain, &c.

—o—
LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

WHEN our exalted Redeemer had glorified his heavenly Father, and finished the work he had given him to do on earth, he gave up the Ghost, and was laid in the grave. But death did not long retain dominion over him, he rose from the dead like a mighty conqueror, and showed himself to his disciples, confirming his resurrection, by many infallible proofs. Previous to his ascension to glory, he commanded his disciples to convert all the nations of the earth; and to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We profess to be acting under this high command; but we differ as to what baptism is. It is the duty of a faithful servant to endeavour to understand his master's will, that he may be able to perform it. It shall be the purport of the following letter to inquire what is baptism?

It is, I believe, universally admitted that our translators have not translated the word into English; but have retained the original word, putting it into our letters, and accommodating it to our pronunciation; consequently it is a Greek word, and its meaning must be sought for in that language. Now it is admitted that the whole Greek nation say, that it means immersion, and the whole Greek church, though they practise infant baptism, and many of them live in the coldest climates, have always immersed, and do

still inimitable for baptism. See Robertson's His. of Baptism, p. 439-450. The Greeks certainly understand their own language, better than any foreigners. The New Testament, was written in Greek; and we believe the Greeks to be the most unexceptionable witnesses, as to the precise meaning of a word in their own language. Again we are informed, that the inspired penmen have used no other word than *bapto* and its derivatives, to convey the idea of immersion, in the New Testament; nor have they ever used this word in any other sense. It is this which is used, when the rich man entreats that Lazarus may be sent to *dip* the tip of his finger in water; when Christ says, He it is to whom I shall give a *sop*, when I have *dipped* it; and when in the revelation Christ is represented as clothed in a vesture *dipped* in blood.—See Judson's Sermon, p. 3.

Now if this be true, it appears to me evident to a demonstration, that the word *bapto* and its derivatives mean to dip, plunge, or immerse. I believe it is admitted that the Greek is a very copious language. If the word *bapto* do not signify to immerse, in its plain and literal sense, is it not surprising that the sacred writers did not choose some other word that would? No one can pretend that it means to wash or cleanse in these instances. The finger of Lazarus was not to be dipped for the sake of cleansing; neither was the *sop* to be dipped for cleansing. It will be admitted that this word, like every other may be sometimes used figuratively; but every one knows that the primary and literal sense of a word is not to be determined by its figurative application. There is not perhaps a word in our language of a more precise and definite meaning than the word *dip*. Yet Milton says:

“And tho’ not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o’er.”

What reasonable person would attempt to prove from this that *dip* means to *sprinkle*; and just as absurd it is to attempt to prove that *baptize* means to *sprinkle*. Dr. Chapin gives the following instances (letters, p. 44) of the use of the word in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Exod. 12, 22.—And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and *dip* it. Lev. 4, 6.—And the priest shall *dip* his finger. Verse 17.—And the priest shall *dip* his finger in some of the blood. Chap. 9, 9.—And he *dipped* his finger in the blood. Chap. 11, 32.—Whatever vessel it be, it must be *put into water*. Chap. 14, 6.—As for the living bird, he shall take it and the cedar-wood, &c. and shall *dip* them. Verse 16.—And the priest shall *dip* his right finger in the oil. Verse 51.—And he shall take the cedar-wood, &c. and *dip* them in the blood. Num. 18, 19.—And a clean person shall take hyssop, and *dip* it in the water. Deut. 33, 25.—Let him *dip* his feet in oil. Jos. 3, 15.—And the feet of the priests were *dipped* in the brim of the water. Ruth 2, 14.—*Dip* thy morsel in the vinegar. 1 Sam. 14, 27.—And *dipped* it in a honey-comb. 2 Kings 5, 14.—Then went he down and *dipped* himself in Jordan. Chap. 6, 19.—He took a thick cloth, and

dipped it in water. Job 9. 31.—Yet shalt *plunge* me in the ditch. Ps. 88; 23.—That thy foot may be *dipped* in the blood. Here is certainly sufficient proof that *to baptize* is *to dip* or *immerse*. In Dan. 4, 33, and 5, 21, our translators have rendered it *wet*; but it is evidently used figuratively, as when Milton says, A cold shuddering dew *dips* me all o'er. Nebuchadnezzar, instead of being accommodated in his Royal Palace, should lie in the great dews of Chaldaea, and be covered with it all over, as if he had been dipped. As a further proof of the meaning of the word, we appeal to translators. Those men who translated the New Testament into other languages, ought to be good judges of Greek. The New Testament has been translated into the language of the Syrians, Armenians, Persians, Romans, Germans, Danes, Swedes, and Dutch. Now linguists, tell us, that in all these languages the word baptizo is translated by one which means to immerse.—See Chapin's Letters, p. 37. Now is it not very extraordinary, if the word *baptizo* mean to wash, to sprinkle, or to pour, that none of these men should have discovered it. But I shall produce some further witnesses to the same purpose from Judson's Sermon on Baptism.

Alstedius—"To baptize signifies *only* to immerse, not to wash; except by consequence."—Lexicon Theolog. C. 12. p. 221.

J. J. Wetstenius—"To baptize is to plunge, to dip the body; or a part of the body *being under water* is said to be baptized."—Comment. ad Mat. 3, 6.

J. Attingius—"For baptism is immersion, when the whole body is immersed; but the term baptism is *never* used concerning aspersion."—Comment. ad Heb. 9, 10.

Besa—"Christ commanded us to be baptized, by which word it is certain immersion is signified.—Nor does baptizo signify to wash, except by consequence; for it properly signifies to immerse for the sake of dying.—To be baptized in water signifies *no other* than to be immersed in water, which is the external ceremony of baptism."—Epis. 2, ad Thom. Tilium. Annot. in Mark 7, 4, and Acts 19, 3.

Luther—"The term baptism is a Greek word. It may be rendered immersion; as when we plunge something in water, that it may be entirely covered. And though that custom is now abolished among the generality; (for even children are not entirely immersed, but have a little water poured on them,) nevertheless, they ought to be completely immersed, and immediately drawn out. For the Etymology of the word evidently requires it."—Opera, Tom 1. p. 72.

I might quote a great number of others to the same purpose; but I shall conclude with Dr. Campbell—"The word baptism, both in sacred authors and ecclesiastical, signifies to dip, to plunge, to immerse; and was rendered by Tertullian, the oldest of the Latin fathers, *tingere*, the term used for dying, which was by immersion. It is always constructed suitably to this meaning. Thus it is *en udati en to Jordane*. But I should not lay

much stress on the preposition *en*, which may denote with, as well as in, did not the whole phraseology in regard to this ceremony, concur in evincing the same thing. Accordingly the baptized are said to *anabainein*, to arise, to emerge or ascend from or out of the water. Had the word *baptizo* been here employed in the same sense of *raino*, I sprinkle, (which, as far as I know, it never is in any use, sacred or ecclesiastical.) The expression would doubtless have been, I sprinkle thee with water, &c. When therefore the Greek word *baptizo* is adopted, I may say, rather than translated into modern languages, the mode of construction ought to be preserved so far as may conduce to suggest its original import. It is to be regretted that we have so much evidence, and even good and learned men allow their judgments to be warped by the sentiments and customs of the sect which they prefer. The true partizan, of whatever denomination, always inclines to correct the diction of the Spirit by that of the party."—Trans. of the Four Gospels, vol. 4. p. 23, 24.

He also observes:—"For this reason I should think the word *immersion* a better name than baptism, were we now at liberty to make a choice."—Prelim. Dis. p. 22, 23, 24.

If the meaning of the word baptism be not immersion, I would ask what should induce these men to say such things? It could not be the effect of partiality to their own practice; for they did not practise immersions. Dr. Campbell in particular, was one of the ablest Greek scholars in our nation, and a minister of the church of Scotland, and principal of a college; yet such was his candour and love of truth, that by his translation, he condemns his own practice. But we have further evidence that baptism means immersion from the places chosen to perform it. John baptized in the river Jordan; Christ was baptized in Jordan; and after the ordinance came up out of the water. Philip and the eunuch went down both into the water, and after baptism came up out of the water.—See Mark 1, 5. Mark 1, 9. 10. Acts 8, 38, 39.

It is true you bring a profusion of criticism from Dr. Dwight, to shew that it might be translated, John baptized at Jordan, or by Jordan, or with Jordan. But I would ask if John sprinkled, what need of his going to Jordan at all? Do those who sprinkle go to rivers in order to perform it. Further, the New Testament was translated by men who practised sprinkling; and there is sufficient evidence that they did not wish to favour the baptist. We do not, as you suppose, rest our cause upon verbal criticism, upon the smallest and most equivocal particles in the Greek language. We are willing that common sense should judge whether our translators have not rendered these particles right in the instances alluded to. We have no need of criticism at all in this case. We think it evident upon the first reading of our translation, that John baptized in Jordan. Neither do we contend that going down into the water is immersion; for it is said that after they both went down into the water. Philip baptized the eunuch, which is what

we believe to be immersion. The baptists know their own practice too well to contend that going down into the water is baptism. Our practice is for the administrator and candidate to go into the water together to a sufficient depth. The administrator then immerses the candidate, and they both come up out of the water together: and we can see that in the case of Philip and the eunuch, Luke describes exactly the same practice. Dr. Dwight charges the baptists with contending that going down into the water means immersion: hence he says, according to their construction, Philip must have been immersed twice, and the eunuch three times. Dr. Dwight may have been a good and learned man, for ought I know; but his reasoning on this subject manifests a great deal of weakness and prejudice; or, in Dr. Campbell's words, he proves himself to be a *true partizan*, who wishes to correct the language of the Holy Spirit by that of his own party. As an additional argument, we observe it is said (John 3, 23), "That John was baptizing in Enon, because there was much water there." We conceive this to be a proof that baptism is immersion; because pouring, or sprinkling do not require much water.

To set aside this argument, you observe that John's baptism was not christian baptism, but the baptism of repentance: and as a proof of it you refer to Mat. 3, 11; "I indeed baptize you with water, unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." In reply to this I would observe, that admitting that John's baptism was not christian baptism, still it was *baptism*; and if baptism meant immersion in John's time, we have no reason to think it was changed into sprinkling when the apostles practised it. But further, I see no evidence from these words that John's baptism was not christian baptism. It appears to me that you confound two things together that are perfectly distinct, viz. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, and water baptism. The baptism of the Holy Ghost, and fire, which John declared Jesus should baptize with, meant that extraordinary pouring out of the Holy Spirit, which took place on the day of pentecost, when the house where they sat was filled, and they were filled with the Spirit, and cloven tongues as of fire sat upon their heads, and they were enabled to speak forth the wonderful works of God in various languages. This was termed baptism in allusion to being immersed in water, because the Spirit was poured forth in such rich effusions, they might be said to be immersed in it. This baptism does not mean regeneration; for the apostles had been regenerated previous to that time, and so had all other good men. This baptism was generally communicated afterwards by the laying on of the apostles' hands, and it enabled the persons to work miracles, speak different languages, &c. and filled their hearts with extraordinary boldness, holy joy, &c.—See Acts 2 and 8, &c. This baptism ceased probably with the apostolic age, and no person now on earth can lay claim to it. But christians

an baptism in water is very different from this, and not at all connected with it, as will appear from the following passages. In Acts 8, we find Philip preaching to the Samaritans, and many of them believed, and were baptized. Now, I suppose it will be admitted this was christian baptism, as it was after the day of pentecost; and yet it is said, verse 16, the Holy Ghost had fallen upon none of them, viz. in his extraordinary influences and miraculous operations. But when Peter and John came down and prayed for them, and laid their hands on them, they received the Holy Ghost. Again, in Acts 10 we find, while Peter was preaching, the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius, and those who were with him, and they spoke with tongues, and magnified God; this was the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire; but this was not literal christian baptism; for Peter inquired, who could forbid water, seeing they had received the Holy Ghost? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. John acknowledged that the Lord Jesus was mightier than he, and that while he only baptized with water, the Saviour would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire; but what proof was this that his baptism was not christian baptism? May not every christian minister make the same profession? I presume no christian minister in his senses would say that he was equal with the Saviour, or that he baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire. As an additional proof that John's baptism was not christian baptism, you refer to Acts 19; 1-6. where you suppose some of John's disciples were re-baptized. This is a passage that has been much canvassed; and many have thought as you do. But on reflecting maturely on the subject, I think you will admit that this opinion is premature. Robinson in his His. of baptism, p. 534, thus states the subject: Paul—Have ye (twelve) received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?

Twelve—We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

Paul—Into what then were ye baptized?

Twelve—Into John's baptism.

Paul;—John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him; which should come after him; that is, on Christ Jesus; and they who understood this (that is, John's testimony concerning the Saviour,) were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. The meaning of the apostle seems to be, that although John had not made use of the name of Jesus in the administration of baptism, but of one of the names of the Messiah perhaps. He that is coming himself at first, not knowing the person; yet when he, and his disciples were afterwards informed Jesus was the name, and Jesus of Nazareth the person, then they understood themselves to be his disciples; the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. This was what Paul said; and it went to authenticate the baptism of John. When the twelve believed He laid hands upon them, and they received the gift of tongues

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and prophecy. A case very much like this had happened at Samaria. Philip had taught them the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, and had baptized both men, and women; but Philip was only an evangelist, and although he wrought some miracles, yet he did not lay on hands, to communicate the Holy Ghost:

To admit that these disciples, were rebaptized, and that John's baptism was not christian baptism, would involve us in many difficulties; first it would prove, that the apostles had not christian baptism, for it is evident they were John's disciples. Again, if John's baptism, were not christian baptism, neither was that of the apostles previous to the day of pentecost; consequently, they would have to rebaptize those disciples whom they had made before our Lord's death. Again, it would contradict what Mark says, chap. 1, That the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was when John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins. In short, if the baptism of John was not christian baptism, it is difficult to conceive what end it answered at all. He was sent to *make ready a people prepared for the Lord*. Now if his disciples in consequence of believing his doctrine, repenting, and being baptized, were not qualified for admittance into our Lord's visible kingdom; of what use was his baptism? or how were his disciples *prepared for the Lord*? Apollon was one of John's disciples, and only knew his doctrine; yet we do not find that he was rebaptized, when he was taught the way of the Lord more perfectly; neither do I conceive any of his disciples were. Many pedobaptists are of the same opinion as I here contend for. Among whom are Calvin, and Poole, &c. Another proof that baptism is immersion, we derive from the intention of baptism; which is to represent a death, burial, and resurrection. This we conceive, is already taught in Rom. 6, 3, 4, and Col. 2, 12. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father; even so we also should walk in newness of life." Buried with him by baptism, wherein also, ye are risen with him; through the faith of the operation of God."—Westminster Assembly of divines—"Buried with him in baptism." In this phrase, the apostle seemeth to allude to the ancient manner of baptism; which was to dip the parties baptized, and as it were, to bury them under the water." Annot. on Rom. 6, 4. Dr. Whithy—"It being so expressly declared here; (Rom. 6, 4. Col. 2, 12,) that we are buried with Christ in baptism, by being buried under water, and the argument to oblige us to conformity to his death, by dying to sin, being taken from hence; and this immersion being religiously observed by all christians for thirteen centuries; and approved by our church, (church of England) and the change of it into sprinkling; even without any allowance from the author

of this institution, or any license from any council of the church; being that which the Romanist still urgeth to justify, his refusal of the cup to the laity, it were to be wished that this custom might again be of general use and asperum, only admitted as of old, in the case of the *clinici* or in present danger of death." Note on Rom. 64.

Here we see learned pedobaptists, when commenting on these passages, admitting all that we contend for. Immersion is the only translation of the word baptism that could at all suit these passages. Let us see how the word washing, which you contend is the meaning of baptism, would answer. It would then read "so many of us as were washed into Jesus Christ, were washed into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by washing into death."— But let us substitute immersion, for baptism; and you will see a great beauty in the passage, it would then read "so many of us, as were immersed into Jesus Christ, were immersed into his death. Therefore, we are buried with him by immersion, into death."— To be immersed into any thing, is perfectly intelligible, but we can barely conceive how a person could be poured, washed, or sprinkled into any thing, or person. Hence it appears, there was a great deal of propriety in Dr. Campbell's observation, "that immersion could be a better name than baptism," because the meaning of the word would immediately strike every reader.

The last argument I shall use, will be drawn from ecclesiastical history.

Grotius—"That baptism used to be performed by immersion, and not by pouring, appears both from the proper signification of the word, and the places chosen for the administration of the rite, John 3, 23; Act 8, 38, and also from the many allusions of the apostles, which cannot be referred to sprinkling."—Apud Poli Synops ad Mat. 3, 6.

Vitranga—"The act of baptizing, is the immersion of believers in water. This expresses the force of the word. Thus also, it was performed by Christ and the apostles."—Aphorismi Sancti Theolog, Aph. 834.

Calvin—"From these words, John 3, 23, it may be inferred, that baptism was administered by John and Christ, by plunging the whole body under water. Here we perceive how baptism was administered among the ancients, for they immersed the whole body in water."—Comment on John 3, 23; Acts 8, 38.

Mr. Bailey—"Baptism in strictness of speech, is that kind of ablution or washing which consists in dipping, and when applied to the christian institution, so called, it was used by the primitive christians, in no other sense than that of dipping; as the learned Grotius, and Casaubon well observe—"Dic; Dr. Seatt's edit. 1772, Stackhouse. Accordingly, several authors have shewn, that we read no where in scripture, of any one's being baptized, but by immersion; and from acts of councils, and ancient rituals, have proved that this manner of immersion continued, as much as possible, for thirteen hundred years after Christ." His. of the Bible, B. 9.

Mosheim—“Those who had formed the resolution to attend their lives, were initiated by John into the Kingdom of the Redeemer by immersion.”—The sacrament of baptism was administered in the second century without the public assemblies, in places appointed and prepared for that purpose, and was performed by immersion.”—Those adult persons, that desired to be baptized, received the sacrament of baptism, according to the ancient and primitive manner of celebrating that institution even by immersion. *Eccles. His. Cent. 1, part 1, Chap. 3; sec. 3, and Cent. 17, sec. 2, and Chap. 17, and sec. 1.*

Mr. Bingham—“There are a great many passages in the epistles of St. Paul, which plainly refer to this custom (immersion.) As this was the original apostolic practice, so it continued to be the universal practice of the church, for many ages, upon the same symbolical reasons as it was first used by the apostles. It appears from Epiphanius and others, that almost all heretics who retained any baptism, retained immersion also. The only heretics against whom this charge (of not baptizing by a total immersion) is brought, were the Eunomians, a branch of the Arians.” *Origines Eccles. B. 11, Chap. 11.*

Dr. Towerson—“But therefore as there is so much the more reason to represent the rite of immersion, as the only legitimate rite of baptism, because the only one that can answer the ends of its institution, and those things which were to be signified by it, especially if (as is well known, and undoubtly of great force,) the general practice of the primitive church was agreeable thereto; and the practice of the Greek church to this very day. For who can think either the one or the other would have been so tenacious of so troublesome a rite, were it not that they were well assured, as they of the primitive church might very well be, of its being the only instituted and legitimate one.”—*Of the Sacra: of Bap. Pt 3. p. 58.*

Salmasius—“The ancients did not baptize otherwise than by immersion, either once or thrice, except clines or persons confined to their beds, who were baptized in a manner of which they were capable, not in the entire laver, as those who plunge under water, but the whole body had water poured upon it—(Cyp. 4, Epis. 7.) Thus Navatus, when sick received baptism, being sprinkled not baptized. *Euseb. 6 His. C. 48.*

Bp. Taylor—“The custom of the ancient churches, was not sprinkling, but immersion; in pursuance of the sense of the word (baptize,) in the commandment, and example, of our blessed Saviour. Now this was of so sacred account in their esteem, that they did not account it lawful to receive him into the clergy, who had been only sprinkled in his baptism; as we learn in the epistle of Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch. It was a formal, and solemn question made by Magnus to Cyprian; whether they are to be esteemed right Christians, who were only sprinkled with water and not washed or dipped.”

Cyprian—"In reply to the question of Magnus. In the saving sacraments, when necessity obliges; and God grants his indulgence, abridgements of divine things will confer the whole on believers."—See Judson. p. 12.

Cornelius—"He (Novation) fell into a grievous distemper, and it being supposed that he would die immediately, he received baptism, being sprinkled with water on the bed where he lay, *if that can be termed baptism.*"—Ibid. p. 12.

I might bring a number of other quotations to the same purpose, but I presume you are sensible that all antiquity is against the practice of pouring or sprinkling, as you have not brought the quotation from ecclesiastical history to support it, though you have relied so much on this source of argument to prove the right of infants to baptism. We here also see clearly how pouring and sprinkling came into use instead of immersion. It came to be believed that baptism was essential to salvation. Hence persons in dying circumstances, who had not been baptized, were sprinkled, in hopes that this would be accepted as baptism; but knowing that it was another rite than had been commanded, many doubted whether it could be considered baptism. At length however, as such cases multiplied, and the power of the church to abridge sacraments began to be admitted, and sprinkling was found to be so much the easiest, the church of Rome abridged both the Lord's Supper and baptism. In the Lord's Supper bread only was administered to the laity, and sprinkling was substituted for immersion. This was the state of things at the Reformation. The reformers restored the Lord's Supper to its original state; but though both Luther and Calvin admitted that the word baptism meant immersion, and that the Apostles so practised, they retained sprinkling.

Calvin—"We see here what was the baptismal rite among the ancients, for they plunged the whole body in the water. Now it is the custom for the minister to sprinkle only the body or head." He excuses this sprinkling by saying, "It is certain that we want nothing which maketh to the substance of baptism. Wherefore the church did grant liberty to herself from the beginning to change rites somewhat, excepting the substance."—Com. on Acts 8. 38.

When the Reformers dissented from the church of Rome, they professed to go upon this principle, viz. The Holy Scripture was the christian's only rule of faith and practice, and that whatever could not be fairly proved from that, ought to be rejected, and while they acted upon it, their opponents were confounded. But when they plead that the church has power to change ordinances, they overturn their own foundation stone. For if the church have power to alter baptism, she has also the Lord's Supper; and every doctrine and precept in the word of God. But let us inquire, has the church power to alter any ordinance or doctrine, or precept given by God? If so, this power must be derived from heaven or from men. Has she received any such power from

God? I think no person will pretend she has. The Jewish church had the painful rite of circumcision, enjoined upon them. Yet we do not find they ever thought themselves at liberty to change it for something easier. And I would ask in what part of the New Testament are christians authorised to depart from the commands of their lawgiver. If God has not given permission surely men have no right to do so. In this letter I think it has been proved that the plain and literal meaning of the word baptism, as used by our Lord and his apostles, is immersion; and that if it ever mean washing, it is in a secondary sense, derived from the fact that whatever is immersed in water is washed.

That this ordinance was not intended to be administered in different ways, we think is evident from the following considerations.

1. The meaning of the word, which is precise and definite.
2. The example of our Lord, his apostles, and primitive believers. It is evident that immersion is more difficult to be performed than pouring or sprinkling; and if pouring or sprinkling answered the divine command, we have no reason to think that a river would have been chosen as a place suitable for baptism, or that we should have ever heard of persons going down into the water.
3. Baptism was intended to represent a washing, a death, a burial and resurrection, which cannot be done by pouring or sprinkling.
4. If baptism could be performed by pouring and sprinkling, as well as immersion, it would have a tendency to produce divisions among the disciples of Christ. As there would have been some ground for their saying, I was immersed, and I was sprinkled, I had water poured upon me. The gospel ordinance would have laid a foundation for division and alienation of affection. Our Lord prayed that his disciples might be all one in sentiment, affection, and practice; and as a foundation for it, they had one Lord, one faith, one *baptism*. You inform us that the divers baptisms spoken of; Heb. 9, 10; mean the different applications of water under the law by immersion, pouring and sprinkling. Now if immersion, pouring, and sprinkling be each baptism, they would not be *one* but *divers* baptisms, yourself being the judge.

Hence we conceive it to be very absurd to say as you do, that the manner of administering this ordinance is a matter of pure indifference, as it supposes that God has given a command to his people, that is so equivocal in its nature, that it is left entirely to the will of the administrator or candidate how it is to be performed. Let us suppose a case in which the candidate and administrator were of different opinions as to the mode of administration. According to your ideas, the Bible determines in favour of neither. Must the candidate give up his opinion, and be baptized in a way that he does not conceive to be scriptural? or must the administrator give up his opinion, and baptize in a way that he does not conceive himself to be authorised? According to this christians are left with regard to this ordinance, as Israel

was in the time of the judges; every one must do that which is right in his own eyes.

Having in this letter stated our reasons for believing that immersion, and that alone, is baptism, I submit them to your serious consideration, and conclude in the words of Mr. Foot in his letters to Bishop Hoadley—"It is evident to your Lordship that when our blessed Saviour said unto the apostles, *Go, teach all nations, baptizing them, they understood him to mean dipping.* Here there is one only rule and law for all nations. No provision for making a difference between warm climates and cold. Not the least hint of two rites, of which the administrator may take his choice according to his own prudence and discretion; but there is one law, one institution for all nations upon the face of the earth:—*Go, teach and dip them.* Why then, my lord, do we not acquiesce in this command, but change it by our own reasoning."

"Your Lordship will suffer me to add there is not so great a difference between circumcising a finger and the foreskin, as between covering the whole body in water, and sprinkling a few drops upon the face. It would be circumcision still, only of a different part; bathing and sprinkling the book of God always considers as two institutions quite distinct." p. p. 20—34.

I remain, &c.

CHAPTER V.

DEAR SIR,

THIS letter, which will be somewhat miscellaneous, will conclude my observations. My first remarks will be upon your motto, in which Dr. Clarke informs us that "It is no wonder the great mass of children are so wicked when so few are put under the care of Christ by humble praying believing parents." It appears to me that the Dr. provides a very inadequate remedy for the wickedness of children, viz. infant baptism. Among the great mass of children whom the Dr. complains of, certainly a great proportion of them have been sprinkled in infancy. The baptists and quakers are the only people who do not sprinkle their children; and I do not know that they are wicked above all other children. In the darkest and most superstitious ages and among the most wicked of those who have borne the christian name, infant baptism has always prevailed; and yet it has never checked the torrent of iniquity, nor do I think it ever will. Baptism in connection with believing, is a beautiful and significant ordinance, and has a gracious promise annexed to it. But separate from faith it has no command nor promise, and we have no reason to believe any blessing attends it.

Again, why does the doctor connect faith, humility, and prayer in the parents with infant baptism. Surely he would not infer that all who practise it are such. Are there not great numbers who have their children sprinkled merely from custom, or under an idea that it makes them christians, and who know not God, and obey not the Gospel. Mr. Scott (author of the commentary) in his life lately published, mentions his winning money from a lady

at cards at a christening. It is to be feared this is a specimen of the manner in which such things are frequently conducted. The minister after professing to initiate the child into the church of Christ, sits down with the company to a fashionable amusement.

Again, the doctor says, "Let every parent that fears God bring up his children in that fear, and by baptism let each be dedicated to the Holy Trinity." The first part of this advice is certainly good, founded on the word of God; but the latter part is a new commandment by his authority, and has nothing to recommend it but his private opinion. He further adds, "Whatever is solemnly consecrated to God abides under his protection and blessing." The Doctor's opinion, as far as I can learn it, is, that God has engaged to bestow saving grace on all those children who have been dedicated to God in baptism, and whose parents are faithful in performing their duty towards them. In this opinion I cannot agree, as I see no foundation for it in scripture; and it appears to be contradicted by experience. If God has entered into a covenant with all believers to save their children upon certain conditions; then where these conditions are performed, their children will be all infallibly saved. But we very seldom see an instance either in scripture or by our own observation, where all the children, even of pious parents, are truly pious. Now where part of the children of pious parents are righteous and part wicked, shall we say it was owing to the partial fulfilment of covenant engagements, by the parents. We read that our first parents had two sons, Cain and Abel; one was a child of God, and the other a sinner exceedingly. To what shall we attribute this, to a difference of instruction, example, &c. ? or to the sovereign grace of God, which alone constitutes us heirs of salvation? I believe that the prayers, example and instructions of pious parents are great blessings, and are often made use of in the hands of God to make gracious impressions on the hearts of children; and I can heartily agree in urging all who fear God, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But when the Doctor urges believers to baptize their children, and declares that in consequence of it they shall abide under the protection and blessing of God, I conceive he is not on scripture ground, and is entitled to no attention.

The Dr. further says—"Those who are dipped or immersed in water in the name of the Holy Trinity, I believe to be evangelically baptized. Those who are washed or sprinkled I believe to be equally so." I think it has been proved in these letters that baptism and immersion are synonymous terms; if so, how ridiculous are the Doctor's assertions! The sum of what he says amounts to this: I concede to you that dipping is immersion, and I expect you to concede to me in return that sprinkling is immersion. Why did you not, dear sir, get a motto from the Bible? It is true it would be hard to find one suitable to your work; but could one be found, it would have far more force with us than the writings of any uninspired man.

You observe, p. 25, "that your design is to shew that there is not all the reason which has been pretended for your opponents to arrogate to themselves the title of baptists, as though they alone administered the ordinance of baptism in a scriptural manner." I think however you have advanced nothing that will deprive us of this appellation. You have not made it appear that the word baptize literally used, ever means to pour or to sprinkle. Doctor Campbell says it never does in any use, sacred or classical, as far as he knew. Now, if to baptize does not mean to pour or to sprinkle, why should those who practise these rites be called Baptists? Luther in his translation of Mat. 3, 1, says, "In those days came John the *dipper*."—See Rob. His. p. 395. Why was John termed the baptist or the dipper? because he baptized or dipped his disciples. This accounts in a satisfactory way for our being called baptists; and I have no doubt but we shall have this appellation, till christians shall have generally returned to the good old way. Our principles have certainly been on the advance since the Reformation from Popery; and especially of late years both in England and the United States. In that country there has been much controversy on this subject; and the consequence has been that several ministers and a number of private christians have embraced the doctrine of believers' baptism. Many of them have joined baptist churches, while some have remained in Methodist and Congregational churches, after being baptized upon a profession of their faith. In England also these principles prevail.

In reading the life of Mr. Scott, (author of the commentary, &c.) lately, I find him complain in a letter, that all arguments in behalf of infant sprinkling, could not satisfy his people, but many of them who had been converted by his ministry, would go off to a neighbouring village, and be immersed by the baptists. What could be the reason that this great and good man could not satisfy his people upon this subject. Does it not seem that as the stars in their courses fought against Sisera in ancient times, so the apostles, the stars of the New Testament, fight against infant sprinkling? If so it must certainly fall. I come now to make a few observations upon your improvement of the subject in your letters. Your first reflection is—"It is not a little to be regretted, that this ordinance is so rarely made a theme of discussion in the desk;" and you acknowledge your own faults in this respect. Permit me to act as a comforter on this occasion. I conceive there can be no blame attached to you for omitting to preach in support of infant baptism. You know it is a scripture maxim that "where there is no law, there is no transgression." Now you admit yourself, there is no law for infant baptism in scripture; and your reasoning in its favour, is only by way of inference and analogy. We are exhorted in scripture to preach *the word*, and rightly to divide *the word of truth*; but I conceive we shall not be blamed for not preaching more than the Bible contains. You proceed to enquire why such a difference is made (by ministers of the gospel) between two institutions of Christ's Baptism and the Lord's supper: invested with the

same authority, solemnity, and influence; and you observe, that "whatever may be the ground of this distinction it cannot be a good one." This is I think an important enquiry. Let us examine the difference generally made between these ordinances by pedobaptists. 1. There is a difference in their origin; according to your account, baptism originated with the Jews; and as we have no account of a divine command for it, in all probability, it had no other origin than the Jewish Rabbins. Here then is an important difference: The Lord's supper was instituted by Jesus Christ, baptism was only adopted by him from the Jews.

Again you make a difference between the subjects of these two ordinances, baptism is administered to infants, the Lord's supper is not. You also make a difference between the administration of these ordinances. I believe no minister, who is a man of piety, and judgement would think himself at liberty to deviate from the example of the Saviour, in breaking bread, and pouring wine, &c. but in the ordinance of baptism, you think it to be a matter of pure indifference, how water is applied, or in what quantity. If it be applied in any way whatever, in the name of the Trinity, you think it to be sufficient. Now can any one suppose, that while this difference is made in practice, that preaching will ever put them upon a level? Let us inquire how this difference took place. In primitive times these ordinances were both confined to professed disciples. Our Lord equally honoured both, by submitting to the one, and administering the other. In process of time these ordinances were considered essential to salvation, and were administered to infants; still they were considered equally sacred, and were not separated as to the subjects. At length the doctrine of a real change of the elements in the Lord's supper, into the body and blood of Christ took place. It then began to be thought improper to give the Lord's supper to children, and infant communion fell into disuse. Things were in this state, at the reformation when the reformers rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, but still continued to act as if they believed it. For they continued to baptize infants without bringing them to communion, and this has continued even since, among pedobaptists. Now the baptists are the only people who act as if they considered these ordinances as vested with the same authority, solemnity and influence. We believe, that when John was sent to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, God commanded him what to preach, and whom to baptize, and those who were baptized by him were then qualified for a place in the visible kingdom of our Lord. And that the gospel church, or visible kingdom of our Lord was then opened, and men began to press into it, though not fully established, nor clearly displayed till the day of pentecost: Baptism then was instituted by God, and first practised by John, afterwards honoured by our Lord, in submitting to it, and enforced upon all his disciples, till the end of the world. The Lord's supper was instituted by the Saviour himself, and also enforced upon all his disciples till the end of time. Here then both these ordinances were of God, and

so were placed upon a level. We also confine both these ordinances to the same subjects, viz. the professed followers of the Saviour, and we consider ourselves, equally bound by our Lord's command and example, to administer these ordinances as they were first delivered to the saints. Dr. Dwight declares himself at a loss to determine why such a difference should be made between these ordinances; perhaps what has been said may solve the difficulty, and may also show how these ordinances may be again placed in the same state in which our Lord instituted them, viz. by confining himself to the same persons, to whom the Lord's supper is administered, professed believers, and administering it in the same way which the apostles practised; but while infant sprinkling is substituted for believers, baptism will always appear an uninteresting ceremony. You also quote the Dr. as saying "How many persons are there in the christian world, who have been dedicated to God in their infancy by baptism, and who yet never thought of a single privilege, realised a single obligation, nor performed a single duty created by this ordinance?" I would ask Dr. Dwight what duties, obligations, or privileges baptism creates? for my part, I know of none. It is the duty of all men, where the gospel comes, to believe and obey it. But it is not baptism that creates this a duty. It is the excellence of the gospel, the evidence of its divine origin that accompanies it, its suitableness to our state, &c. After censuring such persons for their ignorance and wickedness, he thus proceeds—"God has called you, my young friends, into his visible kingdom in the morning of life. He has publicly sealed you as his children, and planted you in the nursery of his church." This to be sure is a fashionable strain of preaching, to consider all who were baptized in infancy as christians and children of God; but it appears to me to be very unscriptural and dangerous to the souls of men. John says that as many as received Christ, to them gave he power to become the children of God even to them who believe on his name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" and Paul addressing the Galatians says, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" but Dr. Dwight has got a new way of making children of God, even by natural descent from believers and baptism. He supposes some of these persons to be ignorant of their own baptism, and of every christian duty, privilege, and obligation, and yet considers them the children of God, planted in the church, &c. There is something so absurd in this, and so contrary to scripture, that I am astonished that you should bring it forward. If all who are sprinkled in infancy become by this act the children of God by regeneration and adoption, it is indeed an unspeakable blessing, and you do well to contend for it; but if they are by nature the same as other children, viz. "children of wrath even as others;" how dare any one call them children of God, and thus lull them asleep, as if they were in a state of favour with God. For my part I believe

the apostles would have suffered their hands to be cut off, before they would have written such things, and I think it a strong proof of the bad tendency of infant baptism, when it leads its advocates to such an unscriptural way of addressing unregenerated persons. In concluding you observe, "That it would have been presumption in you to have attempted this work single handed, and to have obtruded any kind of a work upon the public without that sanction that is properly derived from a deference to great names, and distinguished abilities; and that your chief consolation is, that you have been able to fortify your cause, and adorn your pages by such excellent citations." But why dear sir, should you be afraid to undertake this work single handed? You know David had such confidence in his God, that he refused to fight the Lord's battle in borrowed armour, because he had not proved it, and he encountered his opponent with a sling, and stone; but you come to us in a well-polished coat of mail, furnished by men of great name and distinguished abilities. It is true such parts of the subject as related to the meaning of words, and to historical facts, must in a great degree be decided by the testimony of learned men; but where this is not the case, the scripture ought to be our only guide; and it appears to me to be a poor consolation that is to be derived from the sanction of great names, when we have not the word of God to support us.

In what I have written, I am not sensible that I have been under any undue bias in favour of the principles and practices which I have advocated. My parents (who I hope are now in heaven,) were pedobaptists; and I was I suppose sprinkled in infancy; and I have relatives and friends who are dear to me, who still continue this practice. Moreover I am sensible that I am acting for eternity; and that all my thoughts, words, and actions will be reviewed by the Judge of all the earth, and that such of them as are wrong will be burnt up as "wood, hay, and stubble:" even should I be so happy as to be saved, I am willing to acknowledge the piety and talents of many excellent men, who practise infant sprinkling; but I cannot follow them any further than they follow Christ. As far as I know my own heart, my desire is to promote the interests of pure and undefiled religion, in principle and practice; and not merely to defend the denomination to which I belong. I have spoken my mind plainly, but I have not wished to give unnecessary offence. If I have in any instance manifested a wrong spirit, or said any thing that has the appearance of being personal, forgive, and pray for me. If I have advanced any thing erroneous, I shall be happy to be set right; and may the Lord give us understanding in all things. If after having reconsidered these things, we should still retain our present sentiments, I hope we may finally meet in the presence of God and the Lamb, where all darkness shall forever flee away, and we shall be of one heart and one mind. I remain yours affectionately and respectfully,

WILLIAM ELDER.

