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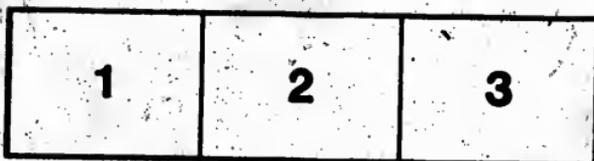
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POPULAR

BAPTIST ARGUMENTS

REVIEWED.

BY

THE REV. JAS. TRAVERS LEWIS, B. A.

TORONTO:

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BAPTIST ARGUMENTS REVIEWED.

In the following pages some of the most popular arguments against infant baptism are combated. The operations or effect of baptism are not treated of, the controversy being confined to the question whether there be such evidence existing as to warrant Baptists in asserting that persons baptized in infancy are not baptized at all. And, without doubt, all Baptists should carefully consider this evidence, because they decidedly lack any support which men may derive from the learning, morality, or piety, of the first propagators of their tenets. A Baptist may be certain that, if he is a person of ordinary capacity, he may venture on deciding the question of baptism, without much ado. He may be sure that there are no such abstruse arguments in favour of his system, though *he* cannot attain to them, yet the founders of his sect probably did, as they were much more addicted to fanaticism than reasoning; this will appear from the following extract, detailing the first rise of the Baptists, taken from a his-

torian whom all sects delight to honour. The different denominations in Montreal have lately combined to procure a new edition of his work.

“It is difficult to determine, with certainty, the particular spot that gave birth to that seditious and pestilential sect of Anabaptists, whose tumultuous and desperate attempts were equally pernicious to the cause of religion and the civil interests of mankind. Whether they first rose in Switzerland, Germany, or the Netherlands is, as yet, a matter of debate, whose decision is of no great importance. It is most probable that several persons of this most odious class made their appearance at the same time in different countries, and we may fix this period soon after the dawn of the Reformation, when Luther arose to set bounds to the ambition of Rome. This appears from a variety of circumstances, and especially this striking one—that the first Anabaptist doctors, of any eminence, were almost all heads and leaders of particular and separate sects. For it must be carefully observed, that though all these projectors of a new and unspotted Church were comprehended under the general denomination of Anabaptists, on account of their opposing the baptism of infants and rebaptizing such as had received the sacrament in their childhood, yet they were, from their origin, sub-divided into various sects,

which differed from each other in points of no small moment. The most pernicious of all those that composed this motley multitude, was that which pretended that the founders of this new and perfect Church were under the direction of a divine impulse, and armed against all opposition by the power of working miracles.—It was this detestable faction that, in 1521, began their fanatical work under the guidance of Munzer, Stubner and Storck. They employed at first the various acts of persuasion, in order to propagate their doctrine; but when they saw that these methods of making proselytes were not attended with such a rapid success, and that the ministry of Luther and other eminent Reformers were detrimental to their cause, they had recourse to more expeditious measures, and attempted to propagate their fanatical doctrine by force of arms: but this seditious crowd was routed and dispersed without much difficulty by the Elector of Saxony and other princes. Munzer, their ringleader, was ignominiously put to death, and his factious counsellors dispersed abroad in different places. A great part of this rabble seemed delirious, and nothing more extravagant or incredible can be imagined than the dreams and visions that were constantly arising in their disordered minds. Such of them as had some spark of reason left, and had reflection enough to reduce their notions into a certain form,

maintained, among others, the following points of doctrine:—"That the Church of Christ ought to be exempt from all sin; that all things ought to be in common among the faithful; that the baptism of infants was an invention of the devil," &c., &c.—Mosheim, cen. xvi., sec. iii.

The foregoing extract, taken from a historian of such eminence and candour, shows that Baptists have no such learned arguments in reserve, that they need deliberate about examining for themselves. This treatise is, therefore, commended to their attention, as it has been taken in hand for the purpose of refuting "A concise view of Christian Baptism," put forth by the Baptist College in Montreal, and designated by the publishers as "an able treatise" on the question. It is more especially commended to those members of the English Church who have become much more familiar with the arguments against infant baptism than with those for it. Let both be balanced together, and we have little doubt that the members of the Church will see ample reasons why they "may not change the faith of their fathers like a garment unsuited to the climate in which they seek to dwell."

At the time of the Reformation in the English Church, while many abuses were laid aside, many practices of immemorial antiquity were retained, and perpetuated to this day :

the Churchmen of that day, and we of the present, who abide by their decision, are justly called on to give our reasons for the changes then made in doctrine or discipline. Accordingly, we readily undertake to disprove transubstantiation, image worship, papal infallibility, &c.; but as regards those articles of faith, or ceremonies, which the English Church held before the Reformation, and retained after it, seeing no reason why they should be changed, these *we* are by no means called on to establish, or to assign the reasons why they were left unaltered. They who differ from us on these points *are* bound to show why they so differ, and then we are bound to reply. Thus it would be most unreasonable for a Baptist to demand the cause why we retain infant baptism, till he first shows us why he rejects it. If his meaning be that he wishes to know why we baptize infants, for the same reason that he wishes to know why we worship Christ, then the dispute is not between us and the Baptist, but between us and the infidel; but if his meaning be that he would wish to know our reason for baptizing, because he sees better reasons why we should not do so, then he is bound to produce his objections, and we are obliged to answer them. And let it be remembered that we feel quite satisfied if we refute these objections, because though we may not prove expressly from Scripture the practice of infant baptism,

yet we are justified in continuing that usage against which there are fewest objections. The matter stands thus:—The Church of England when reformed determined that the practice of infant baptism should be retained. Why? Because it was found existing in the Church. History says nothing about *when* it began to be practised. Now, it is incredible that, if adult baptism was the exclusive practice of the Church in the Apostolic age, the custom of baptizing infants could have been introduced, and yet no notice of the innovation be taken by any writer. Changes in doctrine and discipline, comparatively trifling, have been carefully noted and disputed in every age, and we have the history of them. But that adults *only* should be baptized by the Apostles, and yet that no mention should be made, or dispute be caused, or schism be occasioned, when the strange spectacle of a baptized infant was *first* beheld; that sects innumerable, differing in minute points, should have their history transmitted to us; that one of the most important schisms (the Donatist) should have involved the question of re-baptizing heretics—and yet that not one, even an incidental, hint of the audacious transition from adult to infant baptism should be found in the enormous mass of ancient writings in our hands, this does seem extraordinary!—indeed so extraordinary as to afford a strong presumption

in favour of infant baptism. And if to this be added the fact that previous to the sixteenth century there was no Church in existence, of which we have any knowledge, which did not baptize infants, the proof that the rite originated with the Apostles is demonstration itself. Let Baptists tell us *when* infant baptism commenced? They cannot. Therefore, from the reason of the thing, we are convinced that it arose in the Apostolic age, with Apostolic sanction. We can give them the date of the origin of adult; *as opposed* to infant baptism: and we know that the attempted change in the world's practice made a great stir. Had the change been from adult to infant baptism, can we suppose that the stir would have been less, and yet not a word about it in history? So conclusive is this argument, that it is quite sufficient for the advocate for infant baptism to show that Scripture does not *forbid* the practice. The proof is then complete. But if, besides showing that the Scripture does not forbid infant baptism, we prove that the internal evidence of Scripture is in favour of it; then what more can a sober-minded man require? These preliminary remarks are essential to understanding how the case stands between us and the Baptists before we commence our investigation into the Scriptural objections adduced by them in a pamphlet entitled "A concise view of Christian baptism." It will

be our object to show that those objections, though plausible, prove nothing against infant baptism. This would be sufficient for our purpose, but we will prove further that these objections are not only invalid, but do, in point of fact, support infant baptism.

THE first objection is as follows:—“JOHN PREACHED IN THE WILDERNESS OF JUDEA, AND BAPTIZED SUCH AS CONFESSED THEIR SINS.—MATT III. HE BAPTIZED WITH THE BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE, SAYING *unto the people that they should believe on Him who should come after him, that is, on Christ.*—Acts xix. 4. *As John required those whom he baptized to confess their sins, and believe in the coming Messiah, it is evident infants could not be the subject of his baptism.*” We would in the first place observe, that this objection from St. John's baptism is unfairly stated by our opponents. It is nowhere said that St. John baptized *such* as confessed their sins; this way of putting the objection might lead some to suppose that he baptized none else. But St. Matthew's words are, “Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, &c., and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” An acute reader will at once see a difference between these statements: the words “All Judea went out to him and were baptized, confessing their sins” are widely different from the words “John preached in Judea and baptized *such* as con-

fessed their sins," the latter evidently im-
 plying what St. Matthew does not, viz, that
 St. John *selected* those that confessed their
 sins. But the whole objection is utterly
 futile unless it can be shown that St. John
 baptized none but those who audibly con-
 fessed their sins. True it is that he did
 baptize such, but did he baptize none others?
 All that can be urged is, that St. Matthew
 says nothing about infants, and it would have
 been more extraordinary if he had. St.
 Matthew wrote his gospel for his own country-
 men, the Jews, who were well acquainted
 with infant baptism, as it is well known that
 the Jews when they made proselytes from
 the Gentiles, circumcized and baptized the
 males, and baptized the female infants as
 well as adults. The custom of making pro-
 selytes (as St. John was doing) by the bap-
 tism of infants as well as adults, was familiar
 to the Jews, how absurd then to expect that
 St. Matthew, when writing to such persons
 would have specified infants. A Church-
 man or Methodist writing to Churchmen
 or Methodists, when narrating his success
 in baptizing, would not take care to par-
 ticularize and inform his brethren that he
 included infants. Neither would a Jew
 writing to a Jew. May we not on the other
 hand infer from St. Matthew's silence, that
 infants were baptized, as the Jews to whom
 he wrote would have concluded that St.

John did baptize infants, unless they were informed to the contrary. Indeed we know that St. John baptized some very young, because there were found at Ephesus, A.D. 56, twelve men who had been baptized by him, (Acts xix). Now, St. John was thrown into prison A.D. 30, so that supposing these men to have been baptized by St. John in his *last* year (and they may have been baptized earlier), they must have been baptized 27 years when St. Paul met them. We are not told that they were aged men, therefore there is a probability that some of the twelve were very young when baptized by St. John. Again St. John's baptism is altogether irrevolent, for suppose he excluded infants, does it follow that Christ should do the same? St. John carefully distinguished between his own and Christ's baptism, his being but a mere initiatory rite preparatory to a baptism by the Holy Ghost; so that on the supposition that St. John baptized none but adults, (which we are far from conceding) still it does not follow that Christ should do the same. The baptisms themselves were widely different; why may not the recipients also have been different?

"Our adorable Lord and Saviour was baptized not in infancy but when he began to be about thirty years of age."—Luke iii. 23. If this objection to infant baptism, founded on Christ's example, proves that we should

not be baptized in infancy, it also proves that we should not be baptized till the age of thirty years; but, in fact, it proves neither. Though our Lord submitted to the rite, it was merely, as he himself said, "to fulfill righteousness," to set an example as he ever did, of scrupulous attention to outward acts of duty, and to exhibit in his own person that descent of the Holy Ghost which was to be the characteristic of his own baptism. He could not be said to be baptized into John's baptism, nor yet into christian baptism; he could not have been baptized on a profession of repentance, for he had nothing to repent of. He could not be baptized on a profession of faith in himself, for that would be unmeaning; in short, the argument drawn from the example of Christ is singularly absurd. "'Tis said our Lord was not baptized in infancy." How was it possible that he could? Christian baptism was not as yet introduced, and St. John was an infant like himself.

"Jesus baptized by his disciples in the land of Judea, and he made and baptized more disciples than John."—John iv. He made disciples, then baptized them. We do not read of his baptizing any but disciples, and these could not be infants, for he says, "Whosoever doth not bear my cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."—Luke xiv. 27. The distinction here drawn between making and

baptizing disciples is as fanciful as if an officer should distinguish between making and enlisting a soldier, the fact being that disciples were made such *by* baptism, and soldiers *by* enlistment. This distinction of the Baptists may have arisen from misunderstanding those words of our Saviour, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them" &c., from which they argue that teaching must *always* precede baptism, and thus infants become necessarily excluded; but a slight knowledge of Greek will show any one that the true meaning of the word *teach* is literally "make disciples of," which translation, of course, overthrows the distinction between making and baptizing disciples. The force, however, of the Baptist's objection turns on this, whether infants can be termed disciples? No, say they, because Christ defined a disciple to be, "one who took up his cross and followed him." Infants cannot do this, therefore they cannot be disciples. To show the absurdity of this reasoning we will take another exactly parallel. Christ defined a disciple to be one who hated his father and mother in comparison with him; orphans cannot do this, therefore they are incapable of becoming disciples. The fallacy arises from not considering that Christ defined a disciple *under certain circumstances*. He who had a cross to bear and refused to bear it, he who had a parent and loved him more

than Christ, these could not be disciples. But then there were other classes of disciples. Infants have no cross to bear therefore the objection is futile, because Christ's words are inapplicable to them. Our Saviour clearly meant by this definition to describe a genuine disciple, who, when called on was ready to suffer shame for his name, but there were other disciples of a far different kind. Christ himself drew a distinction between a disciple in word and a disciple indeed. "If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed."—John viii. 31. Nay, more, our Lord satisfactorily refuted this idea of the Baptists, that no man can be a disciple who does not daily bear his cross, by the choice of Judas as a disciple; he had been, no doubt, baptized, "For he was numbered with us," says St. Peter, (Acts i. 17), "and had obtained part of this ministry." Simon Magus too was made a disciple by baptism, yet our Lord's definition of a disciple was most inapplicable to him, and so it ever will be. "The kingdom of heaven (the visible church) is like unto a net cast into the sea which gathers of every kind. Let not man discriminate between the classes of disciples, that is Christ's prerogative at the great account. But enough has been said to refute this attempt "to entangle Christ in his talk."

"The gospel commission is, 'Go ye there-

fore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'—Matt. xxviii. 27. 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.'—Matt. xvi. 16. The Saviour made and baptized disciples in Judea, but the apostles were to go into all the world to make and baptize disciples. The first duty enjoined in this commission is to make disciples, by preaching the gospel. The second duty is to baptize such disciples, or believers, as they are called in Mark. This commission is no authority for infant baptism, but it positively commands the baptism of all believers.'

True, this was part of the Apostolic Mission, and it is for us to consider *in which sense* it was likely to have been understood by the Apostles; bearing in mind that there was not the least necessity for our Lord to have particularized infants, speaking as he was to men who were acquainted with the practice of baptizing them; men to whom the custom was perfectly familiar, the laws (as we before said) invariably baptising as well as circumcising the children of Gentiles converted to Judaism. Now the important point is this: our Lord must have known that His command "to baptize all nations," would convey to His Apostles the idea that they were to baptize all without excepting infants;

if then He knew that he would be so understood, and yet did not disclaim this meaning of His words, in short, as he has not excepted infants, the inevitable conclusion is that he intended His Apostles to include them. So far then from this commission being no authority for infant baptism, it is a strong presumption in favor of the practice. To have specified infants would have been superfluous; that he did not except them is sufficient.

"When those who were pricked in their heart, enquired what shall we do? Peter answered, Repent and be baptized every one of you; and they that gladly received his word were baptized, Acts ii., 37 41. Here Peter made disciples by preaching the gospel, and such disciples were baptized. On this occasion about three thousand were baptized. But there is not the least intimation that one of these was an infant." Nor need we feel surprised at this; the great point to be gained was to reason the Jews into a belief in Christ's Messiahship, we ought not therefore to expect that express mention would be made of the infants of these three thousand; but after all there does seem to be some intimation that infants were included; there is some intimation in the words "every one of you;" in the next verse too there is some intimation to the same effect, "For the promise is to you and to your children." Truly the in-

timation that infants were included seems quite as great (if not greater) than that they were excluded. True it is said, "They who gladly received his word were baptized;" but it is *not* said that none others were. However, as the Baptists are so hasty in arriving at conclusions from omissions, it may be allowed us to arrive at (not conclusions) but intimations gathered likewise from omissions. Now is it not extraordinary that there is no mention made in scripture of the apostles deferring the baptism of any believer's child on account of youth, till he came to years of discretion? and yet many such cases must no doubt have occurred; we do not read, scripture is silent concerning any instances where the convert was too young for baptism. Again, is it not strange, supposing the apostles to have limited their baptism to adults, that we do not read of the Jews finding fault with them on that score? Yet had the apostles rejected infants from the Church, the Jews who were so strict in admitting their own children into covenant with God by circumcision, would certainly have upbraided the Christians with this unnatural conduct; but in all the disputes between Jews and Christians, detailed in the Acts or referred to in the Epistles, this taunt is never thrown out against Christianity. Here then are two omissions pregnant with *intimations* which we

may set against the Baptist objection quoted above.

“Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them, and when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised both men and women. Acts, 8.” The narrative says nothing about infants. Had Philip Baptized infants no doubt they would have been mentioned here.”

On the contrary we should have esteemed it much more surprising had infants been enumerated here; the apostles, no doubt, were engaged most particularly in *persuading* adults, to them alone they could preach, they alone could believe, *therefore* they alone are mentioned as having received baptism. How strange it would appear had the text run thus, “When *they* believed, they were baptised, men, women and infants.” Yet because it does *not* run thus, Baptists contend that infants were excluded. The truth is, “*The narrative says nothing about infants,*” consequently nothing can be inferred, because the allusion to them would have been unmeaning, as St. Luke was writinig of believers. We may add that this remarked the Baptists—“that when men and women are mentioned, it was a good time for the writer to have included infants,”—may be

retorted. We may as well say that when the Apostles are represented as baptizing whole households or families, it was a good time for the writer to have excepted infants, had the Apostles not baptized them.

"The Eunuch enquired, What doth hinder me to be baptized? Philip answered, If thou believeth with all thy heart, thou mayest. Then he was baptized."

We are quite at a loss to know to what purpose this instance is adduced. It obviously has nothing to do with infant baptism. What would be thought of an attempt to prove that Herod did not put infants to death, because another Herod put James, an adult, to death; or to convince us that infants were not circumcised, because Abraham was ninety-and-nine years old when he was circumcised. Nevertheless, we are told, in the pamphlet under notice, "that these instances are referred to, to show that in the Scriptures there is not the slightest intimation that infants were baptised. Surely, it were strange to expect it, in this instance.

"At Cesarea the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word; then answered Peter, can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? and he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.— Acts 10. These heard the word, and received the Holy Ghost, before they were baptised,

and, therefore, they were not infants, but believers."

Such a circuitous method of proving that these persons were not infants is quite unnecessary, as we know from Acts 10, 24 and Acts 11, 12, exactly who were present, viz: Cornelius, his kinsmen, and near friends, together with St. Peter and his six friends. Surely no argument can be drawn from the fact that these persons who were baptized were not infants, unless we had reason to suppose that there were infants present; but it is almost certain that *all* present were adults, and that they were baptized, proves nothing against the propriety of infant baptism. In other words, unless it were probable that infants were present, while, at the same time, we are informed that they only who heard the word were baptized, no argument can be raised against infant baptism. But it is not only probable but absolutely certain that infants were not present; therefore, nothing can be inferred regarding them.

"The Lord opened the heart of Lydia that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul; and she was baptized and her household.—Acts 16. There is no evidence that Lydia had any children, or was or had been married; therefore, this example can afford no argument to infant baptism. There are probably more households without infants than with

them; consequently, the baptism of a household can be no proof of infant baptism."

To arrive at the true force of the argument, let us take a parallel case:—Suppose an historian of the Church Missionary Society, in giving an account of the first instance of the success of some of its missionaries in India, were to say, "several families or households were baptized," how would the assertion be understood by the English public? Certainly, that infants, if such there were in these families, participated in the sacrament. The same rule of interpretation holds here. St. Luke, the historian of the Church's earliest success, speaks of families being baptized, and unless he had specially excepted them, the mass of the Jewish people would have supposed that infants were included. Now, there is quite as much probability of there being infants in Lydia's household as the reverse, but still we build no argument on a single instance; *our* argument (in addition to the probability that the inspired writer would not have allowed himself to be misunderstood) is briefly this:—from the *frequent* mention of whole families being baptized, and from the casual way in which the mention is made, we conclude that it was quite *a usual thing* with the Apostles to baptize households, and therefore to baptize infants, because though the probability that *one* household contained infants, is

slight, yet the probability that among many households there were some infants, is very great, indeed amounts to certainty.

‘ Paul and Silas spake unto the jailer the word of the Lord, and to all that were in the house; and he was baptized, he and all his, straightway;’ and *“ he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house.”*—Acts 16, 31. *The Apostles would not speak the word of the Lord to infants. Nor could it be said of infants that they rejoiced, believing in God. But this is said of the jailer and of all his house.”*

If there were infants in this family, they were unquestionably baptized. The words “he and all his” are decisive on this point. The reasons assigned above to show that they were not present are exceedingly frivolous, viz: Paul and Silas spake the word to all that were in the house. They would not speak the word to infants, therefore they were not in the house. A specimen of reasoning exactly similar is the following: St. Paul spake the word to all that were in the house. He would not speak to the jailer’s sword, therefore it was not in the house. Any one but a person resolved to prove his position at all hazards would at once see that the historian when he wrote that St. Paul spake to all that were in the house, *meant* to all that could understand him. He never calculated on having readers so obtuse as to suppose that the words “he spake to all that

were in the house" were equivalent to saying that all the human beings present who heard him, understood him, and, consequently, could not be infants. And as the words of the sacred writer do not necessarily imply that infants were not present, neither does the omission of any mention concerning them, prove their absence. Had the omission been supplied thus:—"he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house, except the infants," we should have had a piece of information quite unworthy of an inspired writer. From these considerations, we are warranted in saying that there is no proof whatever from the words of the history, that there were no infants in this household; but, on the contrary, besides the probability of there being infants in every family, let the reader observe the accumulation of allusions to the *whole* family in this short account of the jailer's conversion, "Thou shalt be saved, and thy house." "He spake the word to all that were in the house." "He was baptized, he and all his." "Believing in God, with all his house." Now, here are four *designed* allusions to the *whole* family, which, when combined with the fact that there is not a shadow of proof that all the family was adult, justifies us in asking would St. Luke have misled his Jewish readers, who, to a certainty, would have inferred that the jailer's infants were baptized, unless informed to the contrary?

"Crispus believed on the Lord with all his house;" and "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."—Acts 18, 8. "All the house of Crispus believed on the Lord, therefore none of them could be infants. The many Corinthians heard, believed, and then were baptized."

It is curious to observe the anxiety with which Baptists endeavour to prove that there were no infants in *any* of these families. Perhaps there were none in that of Crispus, and perhaps there were. The words of the text certainly do not prove anything on the subject, St. Luke evidently meaning that Crispus, and those of his family who were capable of believing, believed. Indeed, this method of disproving infant baptism is most absurd. The Baptists quote all the instances of baptism they can find; and from each they argue that positively there were no infants present on any of these occasion; then, summing up the argument, they tell us that they have enumerated all these instances *to show that in them there is not the slightest intimation of infants being baptized.* Surely it would be very odd if there *were* any intimation of the baptism of persons not present. That baptism should not be administered to infants, *because* there happened to be none but adults present on a few occasions when the Apostles baptized, is extraordinary reasoning.

"Paul baptized the household of Stephanas."
 —1 Cor. 14. *"Ye know the house of
 Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia,
 and that they have addicted themselves to the
 ministry of the saints."*—1 Cor. 16, 15.
*These ministers to the saints could not be in-
 fants.*

Certainly not. But that does not prove that there were no infants in the family. Suppose we said: "We knew a family which was both amiable and liberal," who would imagine that we meant that there were no infants in that family? Every one would see that we intended to say that those of the family who could exhibit amiability and liberality, did so. Let us, then, apply the same test to St. Paul's words as we should to each others. Such are the objections, from the Scripture instances, to infant baptism, which, say the Baptists, *"prove that nothing can be gathered from Scripture in favour of infant baptism."* Let the candid reader decide whether the objections contain a particle of proof *against* infant baptism; and let him remember that we should be content had we (as we have) established this point.

But, say they, there are still stronger evidences against infant baptism—*"the Scriptures contain presumptive evidence against it."*
 I. *The Evangelists three times record the fact that infants were brought to Christ. Had Christ baptized infants, we may suppose they*

would have been brought to him for baptism; but they were not brought for baptism, but that he might "touch them," (Luke 18, 15) and "put his hands on them and pray."—Mat. 19, 13. Jesus did not baptize these infants; but "took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and prayed."—Mark 10, 16. In not one of these three accounts is there the slightest allusion to infant baptism. Let the reader judge whether, if it had been the will of Christ that infants should be baptized, he would not have given some intimation of it on this favourable occasion? Is not the absence of any reference to baptism on such an occasion a presumptive evidence that it is not the will of Christ that infants should be baptized?"

This objection affords an excellent instance of the way in which Scripture may be tortured to prove *anything*. It says, "had Christ baptized infants, we may suppose that these infants would have been brought to him for baptism." Granted. But we know that Christ baptized neither infants nor adults; (John 4, 2) and this is a most satisfactory reason why they were not brought for baptism. The objection is merely a piece of sophistry. Why should we suppose that these infants should have been brought for baptism, when we know that Christ never baptized *any one*? Do people generally make requests which they have no reason or encouragement for making, and which they *have* reason to know will be refused? That

they were not brought for baptism, therefore, proves nothing; nor, indeed, could it, *unless* we knew from Scripture that Christ was in the habit of baptizing. Then, perhaps, his omitting to allude to infant baptism might afford a presumption against it. We never read of adults being brought to Christ for baptism, (though they were brought for many other purposes.) Are we, then, to conclude that he disapproved of adult baptism? There is, then, no point whatever in the objection so pompously urged, 'Jesus did not baptize these infants.' Let us remember, too, that at this time Christian baptism was unknown. The baptism in the name of the Trinity was not yet authorized; not until after Christ's resurrection. Is there, then, anything extraordinary or significant in the fact that these Jews did not bring their children to partake of an ordinance *which they knew nothing about?* Moreover, there is not the slightest ground for supposing that these infants had not been before baptized by St. John, as we have already shown that there is nothing in Scripture to make us believe that St. John Baptist confined his baptism to adults; but rather the contrary. Jesus, then, did not baptize these infants; but not for the reasons the Baptists give, viz.: to show his disapprobation of the practice, but for the reasons assigned above. Again, so far from this being a favourable occasion for our Lord's

making any allusion to baptism, there does not seem to have been any room whatever for referring to it; the probability being, that some persons who had witnessed the wonderful results which followed the imposition of the Saviour's hands, or even touching the hem of his garment, brought their children in the superstitious hope that the touch of our Lord's hands would impart to them some supernatural graces.---Our Saviour accordingly improved the opportunity, not indeed "to put his hands upon them and pray," as the Baptists misquote the passage, but "to put his hands upon them, and *bless* them."—Mark 10, 16. This misquotation may seem but a trifling inaccuracy; but it is unfair, because we make no doubt, that they would much prefer to read *prayed* instead of *blessed*. The infants must have received some benefit from Christ's blessing; the Baptists (though asking "what profit can baptism be to an unconscious infant,") admitting "that God institutes no useless ceremonies."

Let the reader then judge whether in this objection there be any presumption against infant baptism? Nay; it seems to us that we find in it a clear presumption in *favour* of infant baptism. The Baptists do not tell us what Christ *said* on this occasion—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

Now, whatsoever these words mean, this, at

least, may be gathered from them—that infants are capable of becoming members of the kingdom of God (the visible Church); and if so, they may be baptized. The passage plainly intimates, first, that infants may be partakers of grace, for Christ's blessing and imposition of hands must have been effectual; and, secondly, that infants, being capable of enrollment in Christ's visible church, may be formally admitted thereto by baptism.

2. *“Baptism is that of which infants are incapable—for instance, “baptism is the fulfilling of righteousness.”—Mat. 3. 13. But infants can neither commit sin nor fulfil righteousness.”*

Baptism is “the answer of a good conscience toward God.”—1 Peter 3, 21. But infants can neither have a good nor a bad conscience.

Baptism implies, and is a sign of, dying unto sin and living unto God.—Rom. 6, 3. But infants can neither die unto sin, nor live unto God.

Baptism is a burial with Christ, and a rising with him through faith.—Col. 2, 12. But infants can neither be buried with Christ, nor rise again with him through faith. If this be a correct view of Christian baptism, there is a manifest impropriety in applying it to infants, for they can neither be what it implies, nor do what it requires.

In all these texts, the sacred writers are describing the effects of baptism on adults, or rather how it ought to affect adults; but

they do not imply anything about its applicability to infants. The Apostles were naturally more solicitous about adults: the progress of Christianity depended altogether upon the conversion of adults. There is, therefore, nothing significant in these passages being more applicable to adult baptism. Indeed, by this mode of arguing, we might prove that infants cannot be saved, because salvation is "the end of faith."—1 Peter 1, 9. But infants cannot possess faith. Salvation is the result of hope: "we are saved by hope."—Rom. 8, 20. But infants cannot hope. Salvation is a work: "work out your salvation." But infants cannot do this.

Salvation comes of reading the Scripture: "Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation,"—2 Tim. 3, 15. But infants cannot read them.

This kind of reasoning might be carried on indefinitely, and we might sum up, as the Baptists do, "If this be a correct view of Christian salvation, there is a manifest impropriety in applying it to infants, for they can neither be what it implies, nor do what it requires." Now, Baptists rightly think that such reasoning does not prove that infants can not be saved; and, we think, that similar reasoning does not prove that they should not be baptized. The absurdity of such argument is so transparent, that we need not dwell upon it; we will only add,

that it overthrows circumcision, as well as infant baptism. Circumcision, as well as baptism, was "a fulfilling of righteousness," that is, the doing of a duty; but, for all that, infants were circumcised. What would be thought of the following argument to prove circumcision inapplicable to infants?—"Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."—Rom. 2, 29. Now, infants hearts cannot be circumcised, neither can they praise God; therefore, they ought not to be circumcised. Any one can see the absurdity of this reasoning.

3. "God institutes no useless ceremonies; but it cannot be proved that infant baptism answers any valuable purpose. Can baptism be profitable to an unconscious infant? Observation sufficiently proves that those baptized in infancy manifest the same depravity of nature as those who are not baptized: they develop no moral qualities by which they can be distinguished from others. Baptism effects no change in the character of the infant; and, therefore, cannot effect any change in its spiritual condition. Infant baptism is a useless and, therefore, unreasonable ceremony. Can such a ceremony be part of that religion, the whole of which is designed for our profit?"

This argument, if good for anything, makes equally against circumcision; therefore, it is invalid; and the invalidity lies in not considering that we are not judges of what is useful

or useless in religious ordinances. Infant baptism derives *all* its utility from God's appointment; therefore, to say it is useless, is tantamount to saying that God has not appointed it; and that is the question at issue. Infant circumcision answered no valuable purpose, that we can see, except as a *sign* of a covenant, and a *test* of obedience; and these purposes may be answered by infant baptism. Surely, "if observation proves that those baptized in infancy manifest the same depravity as those not baptized," observation will prove the same regarding adults, unless Baptists convince us that adults when baptized *never* fall away from grace. Indeed, the non-developement of moral qualities in infants is an odd argument against infant baptism, because adults sometimes never develop any, nor is it always to be expected; because before baptism they are supposed to have had repentance, faith, and grace. Is adult baptism, *then*, useless? No; because it is commanded, and is a significant rite. This question, however, of utility or non-utility is quite irrelevant, and is most unaccountably adduced by the Baptists as a presumptive evidence "*from Scripture*" against infant baptism; whereas it is, in reality, derived from their own preconceived notions of the utility of ordinances. In short, we have no right to define the utility of a sacrament. We may safely affirm that certain

blessings flow from it; but either to lay down definitely the *whole* utility of Christ's ordinance, or to contend that it is, in certain cases, inapplicable, because we see no aptitude in it, is highly presumptuous. To affirm, because we see a suitability in the baptism of adults and none in that of infants, that, therefore, baptism should not be applied to the latter, is absurd. The fact being, that we can of ourselves discern no utility in either case, except so far as results are concerned, and we greatly question whether those results testify altogether in favour of adults. This presuming to define the recipients of baptism from its supposed applicability, probably arises from the erroneous idea that baptism is applied merely in a utilitarian sense, that is, with a view to obtain certain benefits. Now, though we do hold that some blessing invariably attends baptism when duly administered, yet we certainly should err in administering it with that intent; nor, indeed, can we doubt that blessing would, in the case of adults, be withheld were the ordinance thus selfishly employed in total forgetfulness of obedience. The effusion of the Holy Ghost attended baptism by the Apostles; but yet it was not used merely for that end: this is evident from that remark of St. Peter, (Acts 10, 47.) "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" *one of the ends for*

which the rite was given, here was already obtained; but then there were others; one, perhaps, being to test obedience. Let it be, moreover, observed that from these words of St. Peter we can deduce a fair argument in favour of infant baptism. Here we find baptism administered to the Gentile converts, not in order to obtain spiritual blessings, but in order to their admission into Christ's Church, in order to their enrollment under his banner; and St. Peter declares that the gift of the Holy Ghost was a decisive reason why they should be baptized; if so, there could be no reason assigned why St. John the Baptist (had he been born after Christ's commission to his Apostles) should not have been baptized, as he was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb; and if he were eligible, why not other infants? "he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven, is greater than he." Where, then, is the significance in the question, "Can baptism be profitable to an unconscious infant?"

4. "The religion of the New Testament is essentially a voluntary service, &c. The Gospel admits no acts as religious but such as are voluntary. Infant baptism is not, on the part of the subject supposed to be most concerned, a voluntary, but a compulsory ceremony. It is something altogether dissimilar from the whole genius of the Gospel."

Now, even though baptism were a compulsory rite, this would not make us lay it aside;

circumcision, by God's appointment, having been equally compulsory. The question of its being voluntary or compulsory is quite as much out of place as its utility or non-utility : the real question being, the Scriptural authority for it. In short, all these arguments against infant baptism drawn from the 'voluntary, spiritual or personal nature of the Gospel' can only be of use as corroborative evidence, when it is first admitted that Scripture does not decide the rival claims of adult and infant baptism, as no one who *could* establish the theory of the Baptists from Scripture would be foolish enough to make assurance doubly sure by the addition of a doubtful argument. We may remark, however, that it is by no means true to say that infant baptism is a compulsory rite. The Gospel requirements are indeed, so far voluntary, that no credit attaches to any one who does not perform them from *choice*: adults only can do this; but still no person can be said to be compelled whose choice is not thwarted; infants, therefore, are not the subjects of compulsion. A man in a swoon cannot intelligibly be said to be compelled to revive by the application of water, though his recovery could not be voluntary.

Thus have we replied seriatim to the objections from Scripture which the Baptists adduce against the practice of infant baptism. Let us, then, recapitulate *our* argument in favour of

the custom—It is admitted, on all hands, that infant baptism prevailed over the whole Christian world not long after the Apostolic age. Let Baptists, then, solve this difficulty: supposing the Apostles, by precept and example, to have authorized, exclusively, the practice of adult baptism, how came it to pass that such a wonderful transition took place in such a short time? We ask again and again how infant baptism came to gain such an *undisputed* sway? If adult baptism was the exclusive practice of the Apostolic age, how came all the churches in the world, founded as they were by different Apostles, with one accord, to deviate from their example? We must demand some rational account (the common principles of human conduct demand it) of this marvellous instance of agreeing to differ. It would not have been extraordinary had some churches, or even many, departed from the truth; but how came *all* to do so, separated from each other by insuperable barriers, and many, from their remoteness, ignorant even of the existence of each other?

Dr. Buchanan, A.D. 1806, found 200,000 Christians in Central India; Churches whose existence was unknown till discovered by the Portugese in the 16th century. These Churches of Syrian Christians had preserved a succession of Bishops for thirteen centuries, and, (says Dr. B.) profess doctrines few,

indeed, in number, but pure, and agreeing in essential points with the Church of England. In a conversation of one of these Bishops with Dr. Buchanan, he asked about the other Christians, besides the English, who had separated themselves from the Church of Rome. "Those which interested him most were the Quakers and Baptists." He said "it was an imposing idea to wash the body and begin a new life." He asked "whether they were baptized again every time they relapsed into sin or known apostacy." Here, then, were one hundred Churches with no communication whatever with Europe; Churches which had preserved the Bible, and were utterly unknown till the arrival of the Portugese, who, to overthrow such a standing witness against Romanism, established the Inquisition, which accused the Syrian Clergy of the following practices and opinions:—"that they married; that they owned but two sacraments; that they neither invoked saints, worshipped images, nor believed in purgatory; and that they had no other dignitaries than Bishops, Priests and Deacons." The *amusement* of the Syrian Bishop shows us that not even a tradition of the Baptist theory had come down in these Churches. We quote the above from "Dr. Buchanan's Researches" to show the universality of the practice of infant baptism; and let the Baptists devise some rational account

of *this singular* unanimity of the Christian world.

But let us call the attention of the Baptists to a fact still more strange than this wondrous, this universal change which they must believe took place, viz: that not an intimation of it occurs in any writing extant—not a particle of notice is taken of it by any writer—not a Christian disputed the daring change in the sacrament. Now, is this possible? On the supposition that infant baptism was a forgery on the world, was it possible that no one, though he had the means of exposure in his hands, ever took the trouble to do so? Heresies, sects, and schisms have arisen in every age; but, then, there is testimony for and against them. A great part of the world was once Arian; but we have the history of it: it was too important not to be noticed. In the earliest ages there arose heresies of the most extravagant nature; so numerous were they, (Augustine enumerated over eighty) that the three first centuries seem one record of false doctrine; but, then, the true was preserved, and the false branded in history. And is it natural, credible, or possible, that no one of all these heretics should have upbraided his opponent with having transferred Christ's sacrament from adults to infants? So irresistible is this argument, that if there existed in Scripture one plain command limiting baptism to

adults, it would shake our belief in the inspiration of the Apostles. So forcibly do the arguments adduced prove the custom of infant baptism to have originated in the Apostolic age, that did there exist a text of Scripture prohibiting the practice, we should have been led to conclude that the Apostles must either have set the example of disobedience to their own commands, or silently acquiesced in it. But no such text exists, as will appear to anyone who examines the futility of all the inferences drawn from Scripture by the opponents of infant baptism. We have seen that not one of these texts militates against the practice; this is all we require to make our proof incontestible: but more corroboration we possess.—Some of the arguments brought forward by our adversaries making clearly for infant baptism or giving a considerable degree of probability to it. Still further, we have a separate and powerful evidence from the analogy of circumcision, which must have great weight, unless we are prepared to reject or depreciate typical prophecy. As the Lord's Supper supplanted the Passover, so baptism superseded circumcision. The Jewish religion was based on this principle—*a covenant between God and the Jew*. The Christian religion is based on the same—*a covenant between God and man*; Christ being called the mediator of a new and better covenant.—

Heb. 12, 24, &c. Now, if God required children to be brought into covenant with him under his first dispensation, why should he not require the same under his second? at least, why should we not take it for granted that he does so require, unless the contrary be affirmed in Scripture? Might we not have calculated on our Lord's undeceiving the Apostles on this point? Might we not reasonably conjecture that the Apostles would have undeceived us? Thus does the analogy of the Jewish Church substantiate the practice of the whole Church for fifteen centuries.

It is sheer simplicity, or prejudice, to deny a typical import to circumcision, and yet to ascribe it to other Jewish ordinances. What reason is there why the Passover should be thought symbolical of the Lord's Supper, and yet circumcision be deemed a mere national badge, without spiritual significance? Why should the year of Jubilee be regarded as typical, and circumcision not so? The Jubilee year partook much more of a civil, national character than circumcision can be supposed to have done; yet that year was undoubtedly typical. Observe, God commanded that the Jubilee trumpet should sound "on the tenth day of the seventh month, *in the day of atonement*." The remission of debts, and the reversion of inheritance, in that year, were all plainly typical of the grand Jubilee of the Gospel; indeed, our

Lord himself sets this matter at rest, by plainly declaring that he came "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord: this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." Now, if the very laws which regulated inheritance and debt, contracts and servitude, though national or civil arrangements, were still representative of Gospel liberty, why should circumcision be an exception to the rule, on the ground of its being a national badge or characteristic, especially when we are *distinctly* told in Scripture that circumcision involved a deep spiritual meaning? "Abraham," says the Apostle, "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had."—Rom. 4, 11. Here is clear evidence that circumcision ratified a covenant: the terms of the covenant being, on the side of the Jew, faith or faithful obedience; and on the side of God, temporal blessings. To this corresponds most accurately Christian baptism, which is the seal of God's Gospel covenant; and if the first covenant, which was undoubtedly spiritual, included infants, why should not that covenant "established upon better promises" (Heb. 8, 6) embrace the offspring of Christian parents, at least, if not, might we not have expected to have been told so? It will not, therefore, answer any purpose but that of showing the strength of prejudice, to say that circumcision was *merely* a national Jewish observance.—

"Circumcise the foreskin of your heart," says Moses.—Deut. 10, 16; so also Jer. 4, 4. Baptism, say the Baptists, is "the outward sign of a renewed heart." And was not circumcision also? St. Paul evidently considered circumcision not only as emblematical of baptism, but as an ordinance with a deep spiritual reference. He tells the Colossians that they had put off the sins of the flesh "by the circumcision of Christ," and explains this to mean, being "buried with him in baptism."—Col. 2, 12. Again, he tells the Romans "that circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter."—Rom. 2, 29. He tells the Philippians that "we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit."—Phil. 3, 3. St. Stephen, too, was of the same opinion when he upbraided the Jews with being "uncircumcised in heart and ears."—Acts 7, 51. In the face of such texts, to affirm the mere temporal character of circumcision, seems equal to "resisting the Holy Ghost." The plain fact being, that a deeply spiritual ordinance *was* administered to infants, by God's command, under his Jewish covenant. Why not, then, we ask, administer *the typified* ordinance, of the same character, and much higher privileges, to the infants of Christian parents?

But, as it is a favourite artifice of Baptists, when unable to answer a plain argument, to divert men from attending to the argument at

all, by overwhelming it with shouts of "tradition, tradition," we must observe that we by no means found our arguments on tradition. Tradition means the handing down from generation to generation a usage or an opinion. Now, it is not *merely* because infant baptism is handed down to us, that we practice it, for then we should practice image worship; but because there is no well-authenticated account, no historical testimony of infant baptism having supplanted adult. As, from the want of any rational explanation concerning the *origin* of the creation, we trace it to God; so, from the absence of any satisfactory account of the origin of infant baptism, we are forced to ascribe it to Christ. So far, therefore, are we from founding our belief on tradition, that it is the absence, the (if the Baptists be correct in their views) unnatural *absence*, of any tradition, oral or historical, which confirms our belief in the propriety of a custom, not forbidden in the Bible. It is the *want* of any tradition against infant baptism which makes us practice it, because common sense tells us, that had a change taken place in the Christian world, there *would have been* a tradition, nay, many traditions about it. In short, it is the Baptists, not us, that tradition would serve; for could *they* produce an authentic tradition of a change having come over the world, at a fixed time, in the matter of

baptism ; could they produce a genuine writer who remarked the change, and was surprised at the novelty ; could they point out a passage in any ecclesiastical writer which mentioned the fact ; could they refer us to any eminent man in the ancient church who lifted up his voice against the audacious novelty, and asserted or proved that the Apostles did not sanction it, then *might* the Baptists, and gladly would they, avail themselves of tradition. We do not, then, as the Baptists unfairly represent us, rest the claims of baptism on tradition, in the same sense as the Romanists do, when they avail themselves of traditionary proof. True it is, that the Romish Church appeals in behalf of its infallibility, its transubstantiation, its purgatory, to tradition ; but this tradition is as different from that by means of which we connect infant baptism and the Apostles together as Protestantism is from Popery. Can we trace transubstantiation to the Apostles by the tradition we employ to establish infant baptism ? No. So far from it, we assert that transubstantiation was first heard of in the 13th century, and was, *at the time*, loudly protested against as an innovation ; that Papal Supremacy began to be broached in the 6th century, &c. We have the dates and documents. The birth of each Romish error is known and registered : history is not silent about their developement. Indeed, so different is Rom-

ish tradition from that mode of argument, by means of which we establish infant baptism, that it is hardly fair to call our method of proof tradition at all. It is not tradition (which, in the Romish sense, means a mysterious legend transmitted from age to age, by mouth, to the rulers of the Church); neither is it a tradition that there is no tradition of the date of infant baptism, but it is *the fact*, that there is no historical allusion to that date; and so, though some, in loose language, may call this proof traditionary (by which Baptists understand legendary) it is, in point of fact, historical. We have dwelt on this the more fully, because we suspect that some persons have been seduced into the Baptist society chiefly through the importunity with which it is impressed on them that infant baptism is dependent for its authority on tradition; by which word, every ear is instinctively caught, and every thought directed to Rome as having handed over to us infant baptism, with other errors. We shall, then, conclude the subject with another illustration of the argument against the Baptist system, derived from what is vulgarly called tradition:—Two centuries ago (not long after the rise of the Baptists) a Third Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, in the Armenian language, was brought to light, having been discovered in Asia; a very specious forgery. Now, supposing a sect to take this Epistle under

its special patronage, and put it forth to the world as equally canonical, or as a rival to St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, how would the Baptist refute the claim of the newly discovered manuscript? His only method would be the following:—he would, no doubt, say, "it is very strange that, if this Epistle be as it pretends, a genuine production, it never was heard of for sixteen centuries? How did it happen that it never found its way into the catalogue of Scripture handed down to us? Surely the earliest ages of Christianity, which had the best opportunity for deciding the question, would have recognized it, if genuine; and if it ever formed part of Holy Scripture, it could not have dropped out of the book unnoticed. When the canon of Scripture was compiled, it could not have been acknowledged; because, had it been acknowledged, it never could have been allowed to escape from the sacred volume without remonstrance." Now, let the Baptists apply this same valid reasoning to their peculiar system, and they must come to the same conclusion, viz:—that had adult baptism been the exclusive practice of the earliest and purest ages, the Christian world could never have been so completely revolutionized that infant baptism could have been introduced, either surreptitiously without detection, or openly without rebuke. The practice of infant baptism is proved Apostoli-

cal by the same reasoning which detects the forgery to be not Apostolical.

If, then, Scripture contains no precept which either expressly or by inference *forbids* infant baptism; if those texts which relate the baptism of the first converts are naturally more applicable to adults, but yet neither plainly affirm nor imply that infants were excluded; if, on the other hand, some of the texts which seem to be exclusively applicable to adults, are easily reconciled with the supposition of infant baptism having been practiced; if some other passages of Scripture give clear intimations of infant baptism, for example, 1 Cor. 7, 14, which declares the children of a believer *holy*; and if capable of holiness, why not of baptism? If it is unreasonable to suppose that our Lord would have failed to undeceive his Apostles when he bade them baptize "all nations;" if it is incredible that the sacred writers, when addressing Jews to whom infant baptism was familiar, would not have forbade the custom, had they disapproved of it; if we can detect no trace of the practice of infant baptism having supplanted adult, and if it is impossible that such an event could have occurred without being remarked and criticized; if we cannot believe that, had adult baptism been the exclusive practice of the Apostolic age, infant baptism could have overspread the whole Christian world, without exception, and

adult baptism have died away without leaving behind it even a faint echo in history; if circumcision, under the Jewish dispensation, was applied to infants to bring them into covenant with God, and the Apostles were never taunted by the Jews with refusing admission to infants under the Gospel covenant; if we never read of baptism having been deferred on account of youth; if all these things be true, then is the Church of England warranted in affirming that "the baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

We are not so much concerned in refuting the Baptist theory of immersion, because our Church prescribes it, not, however, forbidding pouring and sprinkling: the question being important only so far as this—whether persons who have been baptized by pouring of water, can be said to be baptized at all? Baptists affirm that pouring or sprinkling is not baptism. Now, how is this proved? It would be but natural to expect that men who upbraid us for baptizing infants without express command, would produce some express command for immersion, particularly as they go so far as to say that without it there is *no* baptism. Yet they adduce no such command—for none such exists—they are, therefore, contented to establish their favourite subject of immersion by gathering *intimations from the meaning of words and from the probabilities contained in*



narratives—a mode of proof denied to us. Now is not this a grievous inconsistency? The admission of eminent English Churchmen that the Scriptures contain no express command to baptize infants, is triumphantly recorded by Baptists. Now, we are not more positive about retaining infant baptism than they are in prescribing immersion. We are, therefore, naturally led to apply to them their own principles, and to ask for a plain, express command for immersion, or against pouring or sprinkling. And really we might have expected such a command, if Christ intended to restrict baptism to immersion. The essential elements in a sacrament would naturally have been such as could be everywhere easily procured, prescribed as they were by one whose motto was—"I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Now, a large portion of the world is so arid, that in many countries it would be a matter of serious difficulty, if not altogether impossible, to procure water enough to immerse an adult. Again, a large portion of the world is so cold, that immersion would be dangerous! But, though we might reasonably have looked for an express precept; yet we do not require the Baptists to produce one. We are willing to take their arguments on their merits, because we think that the cavilling about express commands is unfair. If we can plainly *gather* from Scripture an argument which proves that a practice was coun-

tenanced by the inspired writers, it is sufficient. We have no *express* commands to worship the Holy Ghost, to admit females to the Lord's Supper, to change the original Sabbath, or forbidding polygamy. All these are not the subjects of positive precepts; but because they may be *gathered by inference* from Scripture, are binding on Christians. No one will affirm that immersion is commanded so authoritatively, so particularly, as the rigid observance of the Sabbath; yet, on the occasion of our Lord's disciples infringing the precepts relative to that day by plucking the ears of corn, Christ not only said, in regard to that particular case, that his disciples were justified, but he made a general rule for *universal guidance*—"I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." So that even on the supposition of there being a plain direction in the Bible to immerse, yet even then the circumstance of the case should guide us. To immerse a sick man in the colds of Siberia is not in accordance with the spirit, but the letter of the Scripture; nor would it seem more rational, though perhaps less wicked, than to justify a slanderous attack on a stranger, because the ninth commandment *speaks* of ones neighbour. That immersion was practised by the Apostles and earliest ages, we willingly admit; but the question is, did they practice it exclusively to the absolute *prohibition* of pouring or sprinkling? Most

certainly the earliest ages did not; as we know that in cases of clinical baptism, that is, when the sick or dying wished to be baptized, pouring was thought sufficient. That there are analogies drawn in Scripture from the immersion of baptized persons, viz:—burial with Christ, &c., we readily acknowledge; but there are also analogies from sprinkling:—“blood sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth.”—Heb. 10, 22; also 1 Peter 1, 2. Let us, then, examine the Scriptural instances of baptism adduced by the Baptists, with a view to ascertain whether there be ground for concluding from the narratives that sprinkling or pouring is *prohibited*; and if we find that there is no such ground, we must convict the Baptists of attaching as much importance to mere ritualism as Romists themselves.

As a general answer to those instances, we cannot reply better than in the words of “Bishop Bagot’s caution against Anabaptists:”—“It is true that Christ was baptized by John in the river, and so was the Eunuch by Philip: but the text doth not say that either Christ or the Eunuch or any one baptized either by John or by Christ’s disciples were plunged over head and ears. But allowing that it were so, the bare example in such a case could not bind without a precept. Provided the essentials of a sacrament are preserved, the mere mode of application, unless limited by a positive restriction, must be

free. In matters of this kind, what may be proper at one place and at one time, may in others become highly improper, and even impossible. At the beginning, Christians had no Churches with fonts in them; besides the multitudes of people to be baptized, made it expedient to go down to rivers and places where were *many waters*, as St. John did at Anon, which place, by the account of credible writers, there are indeed many waters, that is, a great number of small rivulets, but so shallow as hardly to reach the ankles, and, therefore, could not well answer the purpose of dipping." "In Acts 2, 41, we read of 3000 baptized in one day, and that in the city of Jerusalem, where water could not have been easily procured for the dipping of so many; besides which, it must have taken up a much larger time in the performance than one day: hardly less than a week would have sufficed. Read, likewise, the baptism of Paul by Ananias, where, from the whole passage, it is next to certain that he was baptized in his lodging; likewise, in the house of Cornelius, St. Peter's words "can any man *forbid* water," imply; certainly, that the water was to be brought for the baptism of the new converts, and not that they were to go out to the water. The situation of St. Paul (Acts 16, 37) renders it extremely improbable that he should carry the jailer and all his family out at the dead of night to

a pond or river to be baptized. These instances are sufficient to show that no conclusive argument can be drawn from the cases recorded in Scripture that a total immersion is of absolute necessity to baptism."

But even though the instances were altogether precise and definite on the subject of immersion, so that it was quite clear that all the earliest converts were immersed, yet still we hold that—provided that no alterations were made in the essentials of the sacrament, viz: by water and in the name of the Holy Trinity—the Church would have been justified in changing immersion into pouring, always provided the change was not forbidden.

The Jewish Passover, in many of its particular observances, was greatly altered to suit changes in times and manners, yet our Saviour partook of it, without objection: he celebrated the festival as it was usually observed by his countrymen, without finding fault; and by his example gave a decided sanction to the claims of the Jewish and Christian Churches to determine mere rites and ceremonies "according to the diversity of the times and mens manners." The Passover was originally required to be observed with the lions girded, the shoes on the feet, and staff in the hand, and in haste. In process of time, to suit their altered circumstances, it was celebrated in a reclining posture, not in haste, to mark the repose of the

Jewish nation. The drinking of wine, and the singing of Psalms, were introduced; and yet all these innovations were sanctioned by the countenance our Lord gave them, by reclining himself, by drinking wine, and by singing a hymn or psalm. Now, had the Jews interfered with the essentials of the sacrament—had they made any alteration in the slaying of the lamb, or the use of unleavened bread—we cannot doubt that our Lord would not only have withheld the sanction of his example, but would have pointedly condemned the innovation; and so, even though immersion were clearly established (as it is not) by the Apostles, we should still, in the absence of a precept, consider ourselves not bound to that particular *mode* of baptism; for we hold that “the Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, provided nothing be decreed contrary to God’s word written.” In concluding this review of Baptist arguments, we may observe, that in the *importance* of baptism, we coincide with them, though, perhaps, for different reasons. We shall, therefore, omit all consideration of this point, and only draw their attention to the consequences which necessarily, which from their own admission, must follow from their tenets. They, truly enough, say, “*the permanent duration of the ordinance is plainly implied in the promise, “Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” This important promise was given at the time the ordin-*

ance was instituted, and it plainly supposes the continuance of Baptism, even to the end of the world." Now, if Baptists are correct in their creed, Christ has not fulfilled his promise. For a long period, for many centuries, there was no Church of Christ's on earth, for the Church was composed of men baptized in infancy. The whole world, with the exception of heathen converts, (and they cannot be said to have been baptized, as they who administered the rite were unbaptized themselves, being baptized in infancy) having practiced infant baptism. Yet, with this consequence before them, Baptists do not hesitate to say that "*those who have been baptized in infancy have not, in the sense of Scripture, been baptized at all: they are yet unbaptized, and, without doubt, they ought to consider themselves as unbaptized.*" We stand aghast that men are to be found who thus strive to persuade the world that Christ falsified his promise: for falsify it he did, with regard to the continuance of baptism, if the true admission into his Church was lost for many an age. To mens common understanding we appeal, as did St. Paul—"I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say."



