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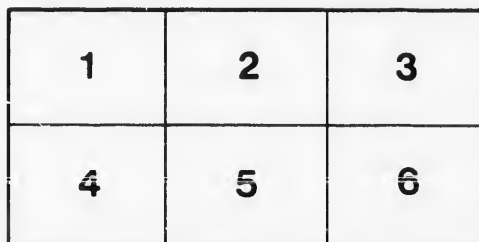
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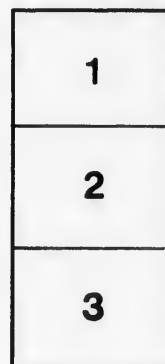
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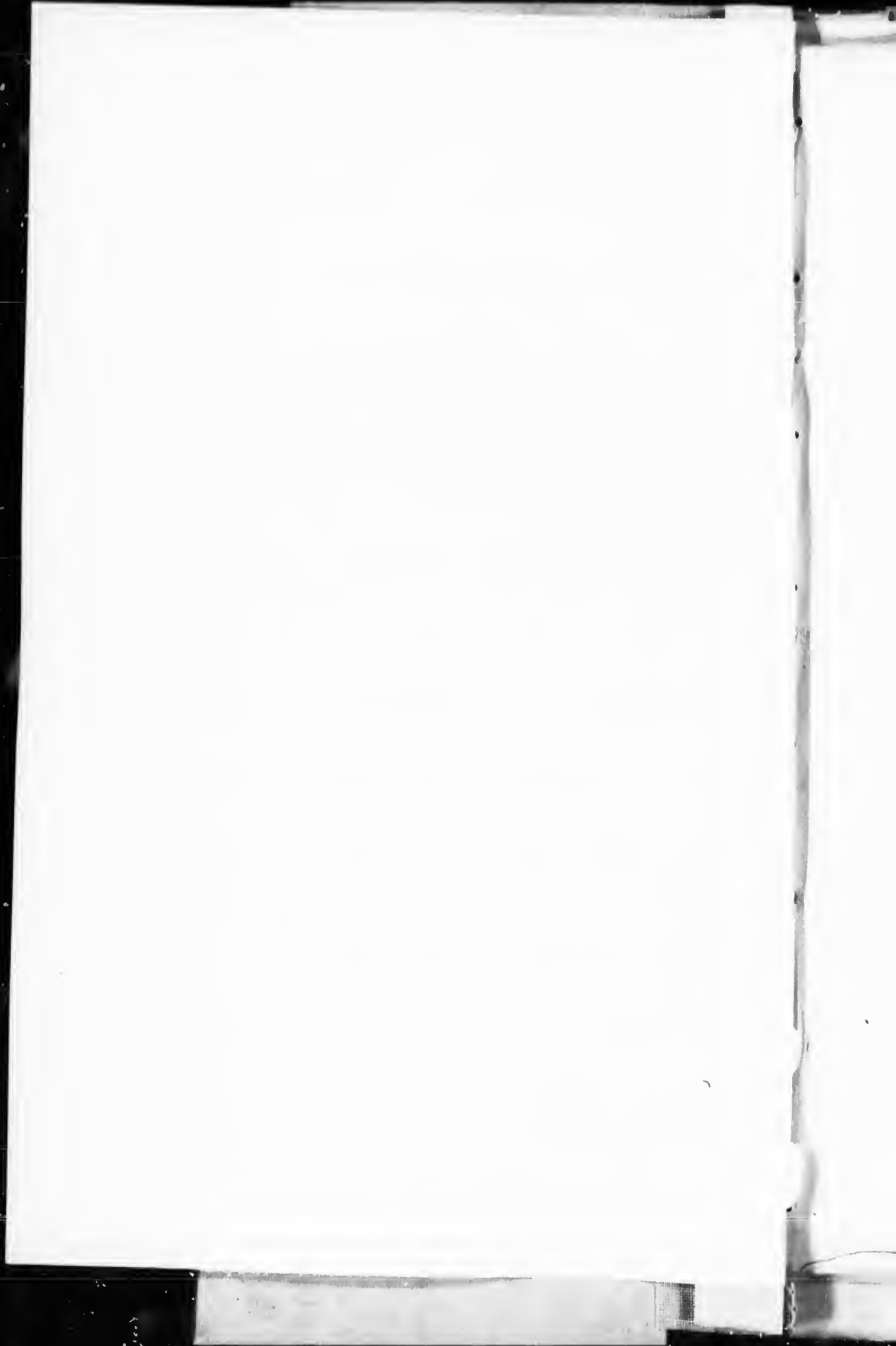
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REASONS

FOR

BECOMING A BAPTIST.

BY

JOHN ALEXANDER,

PASTOR OF BAPTIST CHURCH, BRANTFORD; LATELY PASTOR OF ZION PRES-
BYTERIAN CHURCH, BRANTFORD.



TORONTO:

PRINTED AT THE GLOBE STEAM PRESS, 25 KING ST. WEST.

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PREFACE.

THIS pamphlet contains the substance of an address delivered in the Baptist Chapel, Brantford, on the evening after the author's baptism, to one of the largest, if not the largest, congregation that ever assembled in any place of worship in that town. At the earnest solicitation of many friends, it is now given to the public, not in any proselyting spirit, but to meet the oft-repeated enquiry as to the reasons of his change, and to aid any who may be desirous of knowing the Lord's will on the subject of baptism. While he attaches no saving efficacy to the ordinance—while he has no desire merely to make Baptist converts—he does desire to see Christians conformed as nearly as possible in faith and practice to the Word of God. But, knowing how widely the leaven is diffused throughout the church—how vain the efforts of man must prove entirely to purge the lump—he cannot but more earnestly yearn for that time when ritual ordinances shall be no longer needed, and all diversities of sentiment and practice shall be lost amid the blaze of perfect truth, and the one body of Christ shall be glorious in the beauty of its perfected and manifested unity. “Even so. Come, Lord Jesus!”

BRANTFORD, March, 1861.

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REASONS FOR BECOMING A BAPTIST.

" Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good."—1 THESS. v. 21.

" Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear ; having a good conscience ; that whereas they speak of you as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."
—1 PETER iii. 15, 16.

THE events which have recently transpired, the position in which I now find myself placed, are of so solemn a character, and associated with so many important interests, that only the most weighty reasons could have justified the step that I have taken. Could I have avoided the issue which for some time back I have dreaded, I certainly would have done so, for no consideration short of what I felt to be the requirement of God's Word, and the claims of my own conscience (if I know my own heart,) have influenced me in this change. After months of anxious and

trust prayerful study of the divine Word, I have been most reluctantly compelled to renounce a system which from childhood upwards, I have been accustomed to regard as scriptural, and fraught with benefits to the church of Christ ; to separate ecclesiastically from those with whom for so many years, I have associated in the Lord's work ; and to many of whom I am bound by the strongest ties of kindred and of Christian and ministerial brotherhood : and now to cast in my lot among a people from whom hitherto I have been more widely separated than from others, by educational and ecclesiastical prejudices. But, whatever men may say or think, it has been purely a matter of con-

science, the testimony of which I dare not gainsay or resist save at my peril. I have studied the testimony of God's Word on the subject of baptism, endeavouring to "prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good." The result is, that I have been compelled to give up infant baptism, as unsupported by Scripture, and as opposed to Scripture—a tradition of men, whereby the commandment of God on this subject has been made of none effect. I am constrained to accept that immersion is the only mode, and those who make a credible profession of faith, the only subjects to whom this ordinance should be administered; and consequently that the immersion of a believer on a profession of his faith, is the *only* valid baptism. With these views, I have felt it my duty to conform to the revealed will of the Great Head of the church, and to profess my faith in the Lord's appointed way, "Being buried with Him in baptism," &c. My object in this pamphlet is, "to give a reason of the hope that is in me;" and I pray God that I may be able to do it "with meekness and reverence."

There are two considerations which I believe prevent that earnest attention to this subject which its importance demands, and to which I would call attention at the outset. I do so, because I felt their influence upon my own mind, and am persuaded that, like threshold difficulties, they arrest free enquiry on the part of many whose minds are far from being satisfied, but who are too ready to yield when the possible result is so painful to contemplate. First,—it is often said, and perhaps an unsettled conscience is sometimes quieted with the idea, that baptism is not an ordinance essential to salvation, and that it does not matter much whether we conform to the one view or the other. Now to this I have to reply, that it is a matter of great importance that we should conform in every particular to the revealed will of our heavenly Master. A regard to the supreme authority of Christ, as Lord and Head of his church—a regard to our own comfort and the influence of

our example on others, should certainly lead to an unquestioning and unhesitating obedience. "He that hath my commandments and *keepeth* them, he it is that loveth me."

True, this ordinance is not essential to salvation—that is, as men are saved through the blood of Christ alone, they may be saved without baptism. But it is sinful in principle, and perilous in consequence, wilfully to reject or to neglect any command of Christ. Suppose the same plea were urged in reference to other appointments and means of grace, what would be the consequence? The Lord's supper is not essential to salvation—prayer meetings are not essential to salvation—family worship is not essential to salvation—the knowledge of divine truth beyond a single text in which there is a clear statement of the Gospel remedy—is not essential to salvation. But are we at liberty to undervalue, or neglect, or refuse those means, which if not essential to salvation in the low, mercenary sense of these words, are assuredly essential to our sanctification and growth in grace? Oh! my reader, treat not the ordinance of baptism in this way. The question with you is not, whether you cannot be saved without it, as well as with it; but, has the Lord enjoined it? If the Lord has commanded the immersion of a believer, as an appointed way of professing his faith, then, whether essential or not essential in your view, whether expedient or inexpedient, it remains for you simply to obey. Repair, then, to the "law and to the testimony;"—"search the Scriptures" on this point, seeking only to know what the Lord's will is; and determined by His grace to obey when that will is made clear to your mind.

Secondly. But there is a more serious difficulty encountered at the very threshold of our enquiries on this subject, and which, as far as my own experience and observation extend, is more likely than any other to prejudice the mind against the truth, if not indeed to lay an arrest on all further enquiry. "I have no objections to

believers' baptism; indeed I must confess the testimony of Scripture seems to favour that doctrine. But I cannot away with that close communion." Now, because I myself felt this obstacle to free enquiry, and know that it influences many a catholic-hearted Christian, I am the more desirous to remove the misapprehension out of which I believe it arises. For my own part, I can say, that my sympathies extend to all the people of God, wherever found; and that I do love all those in whom I see the image of Christ reflected. Nor am I aware that the views I have been led to embrace, either have contracted or are likely to contract my sympathies. Before endeavouring to prove this, I must demur to the phrase, as applied to the regular Baptists, "close communion." In their principles of church fellowship, they are no closer than other evangelical denominations, believing as they do, in common with others, that baptism is the initiatory ordinance of the Christian church, and should according to scripture order precede communion at the Lord's table. I am now just where I was before my sentiments on the mode and subjects of baptism were changed. Whatever change has taken place, there has been none on this point. When I was a Presbyterian minister, I had no liberty or discretion in this matter. The standards of my church prescribed the limits of my liberty. I could only admit to the communion of the church those who had been baptized, and whose baptism *the church accepted as valid and scriptural*. I was not at liberty to admit a candidate into the church, on the ground that *he believed himself baptized*, if the church could not recognize his baptism as being such as the Word of God enjoined. I shall suppose a case, by way of illustration. A brother whom I have long known and esteemed and loved as a Christian man, and with whom I have spent many an hour in profitable Christian fellowship, comes to me as a Presbyterian minister, and says, "Mr. A., I very much desire to unite with you in fellowship at the Lord's

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table, but I have never been baptized with water, for I do not regard such baptism as obligatory on me. I believe I have received the baptism of the Spirit, all that in my view of Scripture, the Master requires of me. Will you admit me?" To such a request I would be compelled to reply, "My dear brother, I have the fullest confidence in you as a Christian. I know that you believe yourself baptized according to the requirements of the Word of God, and that you cannot see the necessity of water baptism. But however much I respect your conscientious convictions, and otherwise would gladly welcome you as a brother in Christ, one whom the Lord I believe, has received, my church requires in her standards, and that I believe agreeably to Scripture, baptism in water, as a pre-requisite to the table of the Lord. I am therefore under the painful necessity of declining your request." Now this is just the attitude which the Baptist assumes towards his Pedo-Baptist brethren. We must admit them, either as baptized or as unbaptized Christians. Suppose,

(1.) That we admit them to the table of the Lord as baptized Christians, what is the consequence? Why, we stultify ourselves. We profess to regard believers' immersion as the only baptism warranted by Scripture. If believers' immersion is the only baptism, then infant sprinkling cannot be baptism at all, and we are consistent in requiring the immersion of all received into church fellowship, whether they have or have not received what is regarded by Pedo-Baptists as baptism. But if we admit to the Lord's table as baptized persons, those sprinkled in infancy, or sprinkled upon a profession of their faith, we at once bear testimony against our own principles, and condemn our own practice, which we believe to be according to the Word of God, of requiring immersion on a profession of faith, even of those who have received the ordinance in infancy. You may find fault, then, with the Baptists' views of the ordinance. Prove to your own satisfaction, if you

can, that infant sprinkling is the baptism enjoined in the Word, and that believers' immersion is *not* the only baptism; but don't, so long as you say the Baptists are right, or may be right in their views of baptism, censure them for dealing with Pede-Baptists as those whom they cannot but regard as unbaptized persons.

(2.) But can we not admit them as unbaptized persons to the table of the Lord? To this we reply, that an almost unanimous negative is given to the question by the voice of Christendom, uttering what we believe to be the testimony of the Word of God on this point. The terms of our Lord's commission to his disciples are such as to imply that the baptism of believers should precede the communion of the church at the Lord's table. In the formation of the Apostolic churches, we find that men and women on repenting and believing were first baptized, and then continued in doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread. (Acts ii. 41, 42; viii. 12; xvi. 15, 33; xviii. 8.) This was the order observed, baptism after a profession of faith had been made, taking precedence of the other ordinance. We also find the churches to whom the inspired epistles were addressed, spoken of as composed of baptized believers. (See Rom. vi. 3, 4; Col. ii. 12; Gal. iii. 27; 1 Cor. xv. 29.) It is clear, then, that in Apostolic days, all who partook of the Lord's supper had been baptized, and as Baptists are persuaded from the Word of God, that their baptism was immersion on a profession of their faith, they can find no scriptural example to authorize them in admitting persons to the Lord's table, who have not been so baptized.

But it is sometimes objected, that cases did not occur in Apostolic days such as exist now, of persons who though not baptized, yet believed themselves so; and consequently, that no provision has been made to meet such cases. Now to this I have simply to reply, that if the Spirit of God, who foresaw what would take place, has made in His Word no

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provision for such an emergency, it is not safe for me to do so, when in doing it, *my* practice would not be conformed to *Apostolic* practice.

"But you admit," it is urged, "to other acts of communion and fellowship, and why not to this?" I reply that other acts and forms of communion do not, while this does involve the question of church organization. Any two or three meeting together, can hold communion in every other way in which Christian love and fellowship are expressed. They can speak one to the other, read together, pray together, sing together. Now, could I adopt the principles of the Plymouth Brethren, (many of whom I dearly love, and with many of whose views I have a close sympathy,) who ignore all church organization, I could extend this fellowship at the Lord's table to all Christians, baptized or unbaptized. Were I merely consulting my own feelings this would be indeed the most agreeable course to me. But when I consult the Word of God, I find the grand outlines of church constitution therein defined, giving visibility to the church. I find the church visible to be composed of saints, or such as profess to be saints, and give credible evidence of their being such. I find that they have made a profession in baptism, and that these baptized professors, seeking the guidance of the Spirit of God in the exercise of their judgment, select their elders and deacons, who preside over the church. This church organization, moreover, expediency demands as necessary to the exercise of discipline, and the doing of things decently and in order. It is only within the church, or in a church capacity, that the ordinance of the supper can be celebrated. (1 Cor. xi. 18-22.) This, then, makes a clear distinction between this ordinance and all other social acts or means of religious fellowship. While we cheerfully hold and would seek to cultivate the most friendly and intimate fellowship with all who love the Lord Jesus, we are debarred (painful though we feel it to be so,) from fellowship at the table of the Lord, if the

ordinance of the supper is exclusively a church ordinance, and the scriptural constitution of the church requires that all its members have been immersed on a profession of their faith.

But here again the objection is urged, "By your narrow and exclusive view you unchurch all Christian denominations but yourselves." No, my dear friend, we do no such a thing. We regard them as part of the church of Christ, but irregular and unscriptural at least on this one point. But the objection equally applies to every Christian denomination that claims Divine warrant for its peculiar ecclesiastical organization. Presbyterians and Episcopalians plead a Divine right for their respective forms of church government. Now, in this plea they as much unchurch the Baptists as in the other case it is said the Baptists unchurch them; for if either Presbyterianism or Episcopacy be *the* authorized constitution of the visible church, Congregationalism cannot be so. Or, when Congregationalists say that the church is composed of believers and their infant offspring, the Baptist churches cannot be, correctly speaking, New Testament churches, for they do not embrace, according to that view, all the elements which the New Testament enjoins the church to embrace. And the "Brethren," who cannot commune with any branch of the church, and some of whom would not even hear the Gospel in any denominational place of worship, do surely as much unchurch all these Christian denominations, and far more than the Baptists do! I trust that the unreasonableness of the objection will appear, or at least that it is equally applicable to the objector, be he Presbyterian, or Congregationalist, or Episcopalian.

But it is further urged—"By your close communion policy you exclude many good people from your church, far better men and women than some of those who are baptized." Yes, my friend, I know it, I feel it, I deeply deplore it. But the objection, like others, is equally applicable to

others as to the Baptists. The doctrinal and ecclesiastical peculiarities of Presbyterianism, Episcopacy, Methodism, &c., equally exclude many good men from their several communions, far better men in some cases than numbers embraced. Even the "Brethren," the most unrestricted in their communion, though they freely invite all Christians to break bread with them, necessarily exclude many who cannot homologate their principles. The fact is that we here meet one of the evils incident to the present state of the church, and for which man can devise no remedy. There is, I believe, no possibility, under existing agencies, of again uniting the poor broken church of Christ, and of *perfectly* restoring it in unity and practice to exact Apostolic model. Oh! for the advent of that promised time when all shall be one—one fold under the one Great Shepherd!

"But you hope to meet your Pedit-Baptist brethren in heaven, and to sit down with them in the future kingdom of glory; why not meet them at the table of the Lord on earth?" Simply because the purely spiritual communion of heaven will be a very different thing from any ritual communion of the church on earth. I have no doubt that I shall meet and enjoy everlasting communion in heaven with many whose errors debar them from the communion of the Lord's table in evangelical churches now. But, would the hope of meeting them in heaven justify us in admitting them to the Lord's table in our churches now? All who knew him best, regarded Edward Irving as unquestionably an experimental Christian, notwithstanding his gross heresies. But what evangelical church would have admitted Edward Irving into fellowship on the ground that they hoped to meet him in heaven? Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, and Congregationalists, would not in this case act upon the principle involved in the objection. Who has not heard of George Muller, of Bristol, that man of wondrous faith,

and what Christian has not thanked God for the grace bestowed upon him? He is admitted to be as sound in doctrine as he is strong in faith. And yet, because of a real or supposed inconsistency in ecclesiastical procedure, a large proportion of his own brethren—the Plymouth Brethren—decline fellowship with him in the breaking of bread. Do they admit the principle of the objection? Assuredly not, for they hope to meet him in heaven.

But more than this, the objection is of equal force against all ecclesiastical organization. We hope to be one body in heaven, and to be no longer separated by those little non-essential matters which now divide us; why, then, cannot we be one body now, and agree to ignore every matter that ecclesiastically separates us from each other? The answer to the one query and the other is, that the state of things in that world, where we shall know, believe, and act in perfect harmony, without the intervention of ritual observances, cannot regulate our conduct in a condition so characterized by imperfection as the present is. No church organization acts, or can act, upon the principle of admitting all to the Lord's table whom they hope to meet in heaven.

I feel this aspect of the subject to be so important, and to such an extent the occasion of difficulty, that I may be pardoned for dwelling longer on it than I otherwise would do. I believe that if the prejudices arising from a misapprehension of this so-called "close communion" question were removed, that in many cases the greatest obstacle to an open avowal of Baptist sentiments would be taken out of the way,

It is sometimes alleged that Rom. xv. 7 is opposed to the principles of the Regular Baptists. But, not to dwell on the fact that it is not any positive institution of Christianity, which cannot be made a matter of forbearance, of which the Apostle is there speaking, but of the abrogated rites and customs of Judaism, that text

enunciates the principle on which the Baptists profess to act. They don't profess to receive a man because he has been baptized, but they receive him because they believe the Lord has received him; and they receive him, as far as church fellowship is concerned, in what they believe to be the Lord's appointed way—first to baptism and then to the supper.

As to what is said about the Apostles having never received Christian baptism before they partook of the eucharist, it does not seem to me to affect, in the least, the question. Whether John's baptism was Christian baptism or not—whether the Apostles ever received Christian baptism or not, the fact is the same that they received their authority direct from Christ, and their commission clearly defined the order of their procedure in the organization of churches, and the administration of ordinances. They were to teach, and when men *had received* their instructions, they were to baptize; but they had no authority in that commission to dispense the Lord's supper to any who had not been first baptized on a profession of their faith. This view is corroborated by their practice, as far as we know anything of it from the New Testament history. If any man could show me a commission direct from the Great Head of the Church, I would not ask him whether he had been baptized or not. If that commission recognized him as a member of the church, and authorized him to administer the ordinances, while bound to see that he followed the order of his instructions, I must both receive him and wish him God-speed in his work. The question is not, were the Apostles baptized or not? but, were they instructed to administer baptism to believers as the initiatory ordinance of the visible church? To this question I believe only an affirmative answer can be given. Then, if immersion on a profession of faith is the only baptism, immersion on a profession of faith is required of all believers before they sit down at the Lord's table

From a careful consideration of what has been so imperfectly said in the foregoing pages, it will, I trust, appear to the reader that Baptists, in the matter of church fellowship, only act upon the principle regarded and received as scriptural by all evangelical denominations, that baptism is a prerequisite to communion; and that every objection brought against them on the score of "close-communion," may with equal force be urged against every evangelical denomination. The only difference is that Pedo-Baptists seldom encounter the difficulty which must test their principles, because there are so few who have not been baptized in infancy, or who are not willing to submit to sprinkling in adult years, as a mode which involves neither reproach nor self-denial. But Baptists are compelled by their principles to require of all who seek communion in their churches, submission to an ordinance which the world dislikes, and every administration of which is virtually a protest against the practice of so large a portion of the Christian church. It is not, then, you observe, against the doctrine of baptism as a scriptural prerequisite to the table of the Lord, that the objection really lies, (for on that we are nearly all agreed,) but it is against the doctrine that immersion, on a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus, is the only baptism warranted by Scripture. But of this doctrine I am fully convinced; and any Pedo-Baptist convinced of it has only to apply his principles, received and avowed as a Pedo-Baptist, to make him a Strict Baptist. My object now is to shew you the grounds on which I was compelled to relinquish Pedo-baptism, and those on which I received the views of which I have already made an open avowal. It will be acknowledged, I presume, that the main support of infant baptism is mainly derived from the

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

The substance of the argument from this source I shall briefly state. It is said, "That the covenant made with

Abraham was the covenant of grace; that under this covenant a divinely-instituted connection obtained between parents and children; that in virtue of this connection, the children received the token of the covenant, and, with their parents, were embraced in the visible church; and that, as no repeal or alteration has been made in the New Testament church, founded on the same covenant of grace, the children of parents within the church are to receive the New Testament token of the covenant, and so to be embraced within the church visible." I think I have correctly given the outlines of the argument by which infant baptism is supported. My reasons for relinquishing this argument, which I will now give you, must of necessity be brief.

1.—The covenant made with Abraham, confirmed to Isaac and Jacob, and afterwards renewed at Horeb and on the banks of the Jordan, though founded on the covenant of grace, (for apart from that covenant God could have no dealings with fallen man,) is not itself the covenant of grace. True, it contained promises of spiritual blessings and secured great religious privileges, but that fact no more made it the covenant of grace than the fact that rich promises of spiritual good are held forth in offer to the people of Canada, and great religious privileges enjoyed by them, proves them to be all within the covenant of grace.

The covenant made with Abraham was different both in the class of persons embraced and in its provisions, from the covenant of grace. All natural-born Israelites were within the Abrahamic covenant. Only the regenerate spiritual Israel are within the covenant of grace. Those who perished in the wilderness, and the convicted, but as yet impenitent hearers, whom Peter addressed on the day of Pentecost, (Acts ii. 38,) were "children of the covenant."—(Acts iii. 25.) But all within the covenant of grace are penitent believers,

and their eternal salvation is secured in the covenant, for "they cannot perish, &c.," being "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." In confirmation of this view we have only to look at Heb. viii. 8, 11, where the two covenants are *contrasted*!

I can easily understand how every Israelite was "a child of the covenant." The privilege was hereditary—he was born within covenant bonds. But I cannot understand how or in what sense the child of Christian parents is necessarily a child of the covenant. Of what covenant is he a child? Under the Gospel dispensation the only covenant I know of is the covenant of grace. The child of Christian parents may be within that covenant, regenerated and sanctified from the womb. But I cannot know that fact, nor presume upon it, till by his profession and conduct I have some credible evidence on which to act. The infant Israelite received the token of the covenant by God's command, because at his birth it was a known fact that he was within the covenant. But shall the infant of Christian parents receive the token of the covenant of grace, when it *cannot* be known whether he is or is not within that covenant? But more, if he is within the covenant of grace it is not because he is the child of Christian parents, but because freely chosen of God's sovereign grace; and even could this fact be ascertained it would not warrant the administration of baptism to such an one, because God has not commanded us (as He did the Jewish parents to circumcise,) to baptize such, but the reverse, inasmuch as our instructions confine the ordinance to such as do make a credible profession of their being of the spiritual Israel, and within that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure, and which shall never wax old and vanish away. The fact, then, that the infant offspring of Jewish parents received the token of the Abrahamic covenant, which embraced a clearly defined people, each known to be of the chosen people even

from his birth, is no reason why the infant children of professing Christians should be admitted to an ordinance which is expressive of a presumed interest in that covenant, *the subjects of which can only be known by their professions and lives.*

2.—But in the next place, my examination into this subject has led me to the conclusion that the church, (for I do not object to that word as applied to the Jewish theocracy,) founded on the Abrahamic covenant, is not the same in its constitution as the New Testament church. There is a sense in which the assertion about the identity of the church is correct. It is true of the invisible church, embracing in all ages the same class, saved through the same gracious medium. But it is not true of the church, viewed as an outward and visible organization. The Jewish theocracy embraced the whole nation of Israel, and Abraham was commanded to circumcise his servants as well as his children, and equally to recognize them as members of the church then existing. But the New Testament churches are spoken of and addressed, as being composed of "saints," the "called," "elect," &c., and only such are recognized as having a right to their membership. Now, does the fact that infants were by Divine institution members of a church which God declared should embrace the whole nation of Israel, as the peculiar and separated people, afford countenance for the admission of infants into a church restricted in its elements to those who are called to be saints, and profess to be such? I could not, and cannot see that it does, and hence I have been compelled to abandon my argument from the identity of the church.

But I cannot pass from this topic, on which I might enlarge, without adverting to the consequences to which "the argument from analogy" must lead, if its friends are consistent in the application of its principles.

All the circumcised children of the Jewish theocracy

had, in virtue of their circumcision, what an eminent Pedo-Baptist writer calls "a legal right to the Passover," and simply as circumcised children were they admitted to that and other privileges of the old economy. Now, if you admit the infant children of Christian church members into the church, because the infants of Jewish parents were admitted into the Old Testament church, you must give the former the same standing and privileges as the latter. That is, the mere fact of baptism, which constitutes the child a member of the church, must be to him a passport to the Lord's table, unless cancelled by immorality or gross ignorance. I know that this conclusion is admitted by many Presbyterians and others, and that many Pedo-Baptist churches, whose principles and practice are consistent with each other, receive their baptized members to the Lord's table on the ground of "knowledge and moral character." The same premises led for many centuries to the practice of infant communion. I would call special attention to this subject, that the reader may see the unscriptural and dangerous issues to which Pedo-Baptist premises legitimately lead. If you admit to the church by baptism, because the Jewish child was admitted by circumcision, you cannot consistently demand profession or evidence of a change of heart before admitting to the Lord's table; and the result is that you must admit persons avowedly incapable of eating the Lord's supper in faith, and who make no pretensions to the character in the New Testament attributed to the members of the church.

The right of baptized persons to the Lord's table, (provided that right is not negated by immorality or some other breach of Christian conduct,) is perfectly scriptural. In the Word of God baptized persons are manifestly regarded as entitled to all the privileges of the church. But the error is found in investing those with that right, by admitting them to baptism, who are unquali-

fied for that ordinance. If we baptize, and admit any class of subjects into the membership of the church, as we do by baptism, then we have no right to debar from the privileges of members, unless they prove themselves unworthy. No argument derived either from the constitution of the Old Testament church, or the precepts and example of the New Testament, sanctions the recognition of any class as members, who, so long as they are not excluded from the church, or formally suspended from its privileges, have not a right to these privileges. The argument from the alleged identity of the church, affords no warrant for infant baptism, that it does not equally afford to justify infant communion or admission to the Lord's table of baptized persons on the ground of knowledge and moral character, without evidence of a change of heart.

3.—I have only to add, in this particular connection, that baptism has not taken, and does not occupy, the place of circumcision. If it had, it would have afforded an unanswerable argument against the Judaizing teachers who insisted on the necessity and obligation of circumcision to the Christian converts. But neither in the proceedings of the council at Jerusalem, (Acts xv.) nor in any of the Apostolic epistles, do we find the remotest hint of such being the case. The reverse, indeed, we do find, for Paul tells us what has taken the place of the fleshly circumcision of the natural Israel. It is the "circumcision made without hands," "the circumcision of Christ," (Col. ii. 11,) by which the sinner is introduced into the commonwealth of the spiritual and anti-typical Israel—is made an heir of the anti-typical inheritance—and is permitted and privileged to partake of the anti-typical Paschal Lamb, even "Christ our Passover," on whom the true Israel feed by faith, and through whom their deliverance has been effected from spiritual bondage. Baptism has not taken the place of circumcision. There

is no Scripture warrant for saying that it has, for in the passage in Colossians, referred to in proof of this, the Apostle does not say that it has ; but he does distinctly tell us, that those who have made a profession in baptism, are, according to their profession, the subjects of the spiritual circumcision.

As a Pedit-Baptist my strong hold was the Abrahamic covenant. I always felt that were I dislodged from that strong tower of defence, I must yield every other ; for there is neither precept nor example in the New Testament to sanction the baptism of unconscious infants. The most that can be inferred from the baptism of households, is that *possibly* the Apostles did baptize some infants on these occasions. But a bare possibility in itself could not be a sufficient warrant for the practice, and even that possibility utterly disappears before other portions of the New Testament, which clearly restrict the ordinance to professed believers. Acts ii. 38, 39, affords no proof for infant baptism, for repentance is insisted on by the Apostle as a prerequisite to baptism, and the children to whom the promise (*i. e.* the promise of the Spirit—Joel ii. 28,) is made, are not children considered as children, but as descendants, and who, according to the same promise, were to be old enough to prophecy. (See Barnes on the passage, who observes that it “should not be adduced to establish the propriety of infant baptism.”) Mark x. 14 does not say one word about baptism, and in itself does not suggest the idea of baptism at all, and is just as full of encouragement to the Baptist as to the Pedit-Baptist praying mother. 1 Cor. vii. 14 has nothing to do with baptism, for, whatever may be the meaning of the Apostle’s statement, (into which I have not time to enquire now,) it is clear that the holiness predicated of the children, where one parent is a believer, is equally predicated of the unbelieving husband or wife ; and, consequently, if you must admit that child a member of the

church, because its mother is a believer, you must, on the same ground, admit the unbelieving father, "who is sanctified by his wife." Once I gave up the Abrahamic covenant, with it I was obliged to relinquish these and other passages in which I only could see infant baptism sanctioned when viewed in the light of its supposed teachings.

The whole argument from the Abrahamic covenant is compressed into the sentence, "there is no repeal of the law of infant membership." But if I am correct in the views I have advanced, there certainly is as clear and express a repeal as any one could desire. The theocratic constitution is repealed. The church of the Old Testament, composed indiscriminately of all characters, entitled to a place within its pale because they were Israelites, has given place to the church of the New Testament, composed of those who profess to be saints, the called, the elect of God; and into which no one has a right to enter, who is not within the covenant of grace—into which no one should be received, of whom it cannot charitably be presumed that he is a child of that covenant, and so a new creature in Christ Jesus. Having thus disposed of the Abrahamic covenant, I shall now pass on to the consideration of the

NEW TESTAMENT PROOFS.

The first of these that I notice is the commission, contained in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 16. There was a time when I thought I could see infants, if not included at least permitted by the commission. But when compelled to yield the Abrahamic covenant, I search in vain for any trace of infant membership in these words. The baptism of believers, and of believers exclusively, is authorized by this document. This I shall endeavour to prove.

1.—The specification of a certain class as the subjects of baptism, limits the ordinance to that class, to the exclusion of all others. As a minister of Christ, occupying a

position similar to that of the Apostles to whom the commission was addressed, I must go for my instructions to that document. Whom am I thus to baptize? Infants of believers, or infants discriminately? No, it does not authorize me to baptize infants at all. It clearly defines those who have been taught, disciplined, believed—(compare both Matt. and Mark)—as the fit subjects for baptism. I have no right to exceed my orders. The commission enjoins me to baptize those who have been taught, who have believed, but no others.

2.—The order both of the words and the duties prescribed in the commission limits baptism to one class. How am I to proceed conformably to the instructions of that document? I am first to teach, (or make disciples or Christians according to the marginal reading,) then I am to baptize, and then to instruct in the details of Christian doctrine and practice. Does the practice of Pedo-Baptist churches correspond to this order? No, for there is no teaching or disciplining before baptism. With many of them reception to the Lord's table takes the place which is here assigned to baptism. They teach, and when their instructions have been received, they admit to the Lord's table, and then instruct in details, &c. But the commission says: "Teach, baptize, (and the communion at the table follows as the right of the baptized person), and instruct."

But does the practice of the Baptist churches correspond with this order? It does in every particular. They do not baptize, till under the blessing of the Spirit, they have disciplined, and the subjects of their teaching profess to receive the truth; and then they place their baptized members under the instructions of the sanctuary. Which appears most in harmony with the revealed will of the Great Head of the church? I leave the answer to the candid judgment of every Christian reader, assured that the answer will be, the practice of the Pedo-Baptist churches does not, but that of the Baptist churches does cor-

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respond with the order of duties and events in the commission.

3.—But the commission has to do with the duty of the candidate for, as well as the administrator of, baptism. As the administrator, it only authorizes me to baptize those who have been disciplined. As the candidate, it enjoins upon me faith in the truths in which I have been instructed, a believing reception of these truths, before receiving the ordinance. And more than this, it enjoins on me as a disciple, a believer, the duty and obligation of being baptized. When, as the subject of Christian instruction, I have received the truth, what is then my duty? Clearly to be baptized. Being disciplined, and then baptized,—“believing and is baptized”—is the order laid down in the commission by which a child of God is to regulate his procedure. I may have been baptized in infancy—that baptism may or may not be valid—it may or may not be supported by other Scriptures—but one thing is clear as sunlight, that the commission requires me to be baptized when I can cherish the hope that I have been disciplined. But as the Word of God manifestly warrants but one administration of the ordinance, and our Lord’s commission to his Apostles makes a reception of the truth an essential prerequisite, it follows that baptism on a profession of faith is the only baptism sanctioned by the Word of God.

The attempt is sometimes made to resist the force of this conclusion by replying, “True, perhaps, but your reasoning and your principles prove too much; for by the same logic you exclude infants from heaven, seeing they cannot believe, while salvation is made conditional on believing.” This objection would be fatal to the view I have given of the commission, if salvation were necessarily dependent on the exercise of faith. But we know from the Word of God, that children may be regenerated, before they can believe, and that David’s child was happy in heaven, though it had never believed. Neither infant nor adult can

be admitted into heaven without being born again. In the adult, faith, the necessary fruit of regeneration, must be exercised, for unbelief proves a man still unregenerate. But such fruit, in the very nature of the case, cannot appear in the infant. There is no similarity in the two cases. The indispensable qualification for baptism insisted on in the commission is a belief of the truth, and the evidence of this alone can warrant its administration.

In the next place, let us examine the practice of the Apostles, as recorded in the inspired narrative, and see whether this corroborates or contradicts the views we have advanced. Peter only baptized those "that gladly received the Word." (*Acts* ii. 41.) Philip at Samaria only baptized "men and women," who "believed the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ." (*Acts* viii. 12.) The same evangelist baptized the eunuch, when satisfied that "he believed with all his heart." (*Acts* viii. 37.) Annanias baptized Saul as a converted man. (*Acts* ix. 15--18.) Lydia, the taylor, Crispus, Stephanus, were all believers before being baptized. "Many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized." (*Acts* xviii. 8.) But I need not specify further. The uniform practice of the Apostles was that indicated and enjoined by the commission. But it is objected here,

1.—That these instances prove nothing, because they refer to individuals who could not have been baptized in infancy. "There are no cases recorded," says the objector, "of the children of Christian parents, who have grown up under religious instruction being baptized," implying that such had been baptized in infancy. To this we reply, that there was nothing so singular in such cases, to require special mention. Besides, we only have the record of the *planting* of the early churches; and the interval between the narrative of their formation, and their furthest history, so far as the inspired narrative is concerned, embraces brief periods of from two to ten or twelve years. On this

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account, there was scarcely time for the appearance of that particular class, as candidates for baptism. But on the other hand, had it been the practice of the Apostles to baptize infants with their parents, there must have been thousands of such; and yet strange it is, if this theory be true, that there is no mention whatever of their ever having done so. Three thousand believers were baptized on the day of Pentecost, many of whom must have been parents; yet there is no mention of their infant children being baptized, and that too, under circumstances in which, according to Pædo-Baptist views of Peter's words, (Acts ii 39,) they would certainly have insisted on the rite for their little ones. "Men and women" were baptized by Philip at Samaria, but we are not told their children were included.

2.—But another objection is here urged, founded on the baptism of households by the Apostles. The argument in favour of infant baptism from this source is so generally known that I need not state it here. The most that is pleaded from it amounts to no more than a bare possibility that some infants were baptized. But an examination of the three instances given, and a comparison of these with other parts of Scripture, would, I am persuaded, forever dissipate the idea that even the remotest countenance is afforded to the practice of infant baptism, by the cases of household baptism mentioned. Of the Jailor it is said that "he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." (Acts xvi. 34.) But infants, that is, those too young to make a profession of faith, could neither rejoice nor believe with him, and hence his household who were baptized with him could not have been infants but were such as believed and rejoiced with him. Of the household of Stephanus (1 Cor. i. 16,) it is said by the Apostle that they "had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints," and were such as the Corinthian believers should submit themselves to, as those who helped and laboured in the gospel.

There were no unconscious infants baptized in the household of Stephanus. Many considerations might be advanced to show the very strong probability, almost amounting to a demonstration, that there were no infants in Lydia's household—that there could be none in her circumstances, far from her home, and herself spoken of as the head of the house. (See Acts xvi. 15, 40.) But we shall satisfy ourselves with a reference to the indication given us in the narrative, as to the composition of Lydia's household. After being released from prison we are told that Paul and Silas "entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed." Is not the strong probability that these brethren whom "they comforted" and from whom "they departed," included the members of Lydia's household? There is only one other source whence these brethren could be derived—that is, from the household of the Jailor; and certainly the narrative suggests that whether the members of the latter household were present or not, that those of Lydia's were. This view of the case is still further confirmed by the likelihood that the business in which Lydia was engaged would require a number of employees. The strong probabilities in this case are decidedly against the presence of infants at all in the household. But even could it be proved that there were infants, it would still remain to be proved that Paul baptized them, the burden of which proof would rest upon the Pedo-Baptists—a burden of which they could not ease themselves. The cases of household baptism, we conclude, are no deviation from the recorded practice of the Apostles, who baptized upon, and only upon, profession and evidence of faith. Therefore we have no right to administer the ordinance upon any other principle, and the administration of it to any other class than those who do make a credible profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus, is both destitute of Scripture precept and example.

We shall now glance at some of the incidental allusions to baptism in the Word of God, which, as decidedly as any other class of proofs, limit the ordinance to believers. There is not a solitary passage in the Word of God that even *appears* to suppose the case of persons baptized in infancy. But there are many passages which clearly regard baptism as involving a personal and voluntary profession of faith. The terms in which the churches, composed of the baptized, are addressed, are such as to exclude infant members. They are regarded as made up of saints and faithful or believing brethren. But what proportion of the membership of Pedo-Baptist churches, (where all baptized children are members,) could be treated, in the judgment of charity, or upon their own professions, as believing brethren? Assuredly the lives of a very large number of the baptized members of Pedo-Baptist churches, never suspended or excinded from the church, proclaim them destitute of all claim to the character implied.

In writing both to the Roman and Colossian churches, (Rom vi. 3, 7; Col. ii. 12,) the Apostle regards their baptism as involving both a voluntary profession, and an avowal of privileges received and obligations assumed. "Having been baptized," he virtually says, "you profess to have been buried with Christ—to have risen with Christ, a risen Saviour, that you might walk in newness of life, as those quickened from a state of death, and by this assured that you shall yet be planted in the likeness of His resurrection." This, and more also, was implied in their baptism. But neither of these tests can be applied to those baptized in infancy. They cannot profess in that ordinance to have died with Christ, to be quickened together with Christ, that they might walk in newness of life, unless the dogma of baptismal regeneration be true. The leading idea in both these texts is that baptism involves a profession of vital union to Christ. But this is

wholly inapplicable to infants, who cannot profess anything of the kind, and whom we cannot know to be thus united to the Lord Jesus. But when men and women are baptized on a profession of their faith, their baptism is a confession that they are thus one with the Saviour in His death and resurrection.

In 1 Cor. xv. 29, we read, "Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" It is clear from the connection in which this passage occurs, the subject of discussion being the resurrection of the righteous dead at the coming of Christ, that in baptism the candidate professed a hope of a glorious resurrection, and that the counterpart of this hope was found in the symbolic act of emerging from the baptismal grave. While this verse, like the preceding verses from Romans and Colossians, is most explicit in its testimony as to the mode of baptism, confining it to immersion, it clearly restricts the subjects of baptism to believers in Christ, who, through Christ, could in their baptism cherish the hope of a blessed resurrection, and in that ordinance realize the divine pledge of its accomplishment. The view of baptism with which we are here presented is utterly at variance with the administration of it to unconscious infants, who could not be the subjects of such a hope—as well as with the mode of sprinkling, which has no fitness to suggest the idea of a rising from the grave of death.

"As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." (*Gal. iii. 27.*) The Apostle does not say "Christ was put on you." but "ye have *put on Christ.*" It was a voluntary action on their part, proving as clearly as words can express it, that baptism was administered upon a willing profession of faith. It cannot be said of saint or sinner, baptized in infancy, that in his baptism "he put on Christ." The professor in Pedo-

Baptist churches may have put on Christ—that is, professed to have received the righteousness of Christ and the mind of Christ, when first he avowed himself a believer by some other act than baptism. But only to those who have *professed* their faith *in baptism*, can these, like the preceding texts, apply.

There is only another text to which I would call attention in this connection: "The like figure whereunto," or "the antitype to which, even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 *Peter* iii. 21.) Whatever "the answer of a good conscience" may mean, it is evidently something that can only be exercised by an intelligent believer. It is not a mere washing of the body in the baptismal waters that saves the soul. But that baptism which is associated with "the answer of a good conscience" does indicate a man to be in a saved state. But can "the answer of a good conscience," be connected with baptism when administered to an unconscious babe? No, it cannot. This can only belong to one who is baptized as a believer. As baptism can only be of any benefit when associated with the answer of a good conscience, (and infants cannot have this,) baptism can be of no benefit to infants, and should not be administered until there is profession and evidence of this inward spiritual grace; that is, this text limits the ordinance to those who profess to have had their consciences purified by the application of the atoning blood, and to be the subjects of the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

I shall now, in a few words, sum up the arguments, which fully convinced my mind, and led to the renunciation of Pedo-Baptist sentiments, and my withdrawal from the Presbyterian church.

1.—I found that the Abrahamic covenant afforded no warrant whatever for the administration of baptism to infants—that there existed now no external covenant,

embracing a whole nation, with which the church was co-extensive, and every individual of which as an Israelite, both had a right and was obligated to be circumcised—that the spiritual Israel had taken the place of the typical and natural Israel, and they, being circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, were the only persons entitled to a place in the church of Christ, and to the ordinance of Christian baptism, the door of entrance into the visible Christian community.

2.—I was persuaded that the commission restricted baptism to believers, and made it the imperative duty of every believer to be baptized as such.

3.—The example of the Apostles I found restricted to the baptism of believers; and, while hundreds of infants must have been baptized if such had been their practice, I found not the slightest trace of their ever having baptized one.

4.—All the incidental references to the ordinance most distinctly implied the great experimental change, and a profession of faith before baptism.

5.—When infants are received into the church by baptism, we can neither define their position nor the extent of the church's authority over them. They are members, yet cannot be treated as members. They are members, yet beyond the reach of discipline. The position of this class in the church appeared to me altogether at variance with the position, privileges, and obligations of the membership of the New Testament churches. In the New Testament I neither found this class of persons, nor any provision made for dealing with them.

I think I have advanced enough to justify me in the step I have taken, as far as the subjects of baptism are concerned; and I shall now offer a few remarks on

THE MODE.

In this department of enquiry I became satisfied that the etymology of the word used to denote the ordinance, the practice of the Apostles, and the nature and meaning

of the baptismal rite, warranted immersion and only immersion as the mode.

1.—I first examined into the meaning of the word as given in the best Greek Lexicons I could lay my hand upon. It has been said lately, publicly, when my own case was under decision, that the word means to dye. I beg to say, and appeal in proof to all the Lexicons that have ever been published, that the word always used to denote the ordinance of baptism, never means to dye. It is another word, (*βαπτίζω*) the root of (*βαπτίζω*) *baptize*, which sometimes signifies to dye. And even of that word, the primary meaning given is to dip, plunge, immerse: to dye, being only a meaning by implication.

As I must be brief here, I cannot give all the shades of meaning attached to the word; but any one who can examine a Greek Lexicon, will find that the radical meaning given is to immerse, and that the idea of covering all over with the baptizing element is invariably present. (See Robinson and Ewing in proof of this, both decided advocates of sprinkling, and the latter a gentleman who ransacked the range of classical literature in vain, to find any application of the word which would afford the slightest countenance to sprinkling.) The word used to express the ordinance of Christian baptism, moreover, never signifies to sprinkle or to pour, nor anything like sprinkling or pouring. No Lexicon gives it this meaning. There are many words in the Greek language, that do express sprinkling or pouring, but these words are never used to denote, or in reference to, baptism. When I found, then, that the word by which in the New Testament the ordinance of baptism is designated, is one which never means to sprinkle or pour, and that no word which does express these actions is ever applied to baptism, I could not but conclude that sprinkling or pouring could not constitute that outward baptism enjoined on all believers. When I found that the word by which the ordinance is described, means according to

Pedo-Baptist authorities to immerse, and that in no instance of the word cited, is the idea of immersion absent, I could not but conclude that immersion was the mode and the only mode, and that to speak of baptism by sprinkling was simply to speak of an immersion by sprinkling. As bound in the sight of God to receive and speak and act honestly in this matter, I am compelled to regard immersion as essential to the ordinance, and sprinkling as in no wise meeting the Divine command, "Go, baptize or be baptized."

2.—"But perhaps," I reasoned, "the ordinary meaning of the word had been departed from, and a different and specific meaning attached to it, in its association with the Christian ordinance." But it seemed strange to me that if such had been the case, that Lexicons of the New Testament, compiled by Pedo-Baptists, never gave sprinkling as a meaning of the word. But I went to my New Testament again and read over the inspired narratives of the various baptisms recorded, and rose persuaded that not one of them would naturally suggest to the mind the idea of sprinkling, but many of them could not be satisfactorily explained on any other hypothesis than that of immersion. (See Matt. iii. 6, 16; Mark i. 9, 10; John iii. 23; Acts viii. 38; Acts xxii. 16.) Do these passages not suggest immersion? But even had the circumstances attending these baptisms not in any case suggested the idea of immersion, I had the meaning of the word *baptize* (*βαπτίζω*) as given in my Greek Lexicons, which in no case is said to be sprinkle, but always immerse, the occasional figurative application of the word clearly implying immersion. Had I or any one else, ignorant of the baptism controversy, sat down to translate the narratives, with the aid of any Greek Lexicon, we could not have dreamed of sprinkling, but would have rendered the original word for baptize, either by immerse or some word conveying the same idea; and no idea but that of immersion could possibly be carried away, from the perusal of the Greek Testament account of apostolic baptisms.

3.—In the next place I endeavoured to find light on the subject of mode, by a consideration of the symbolical meaning of baptism. This is clearly set forth in those passages already quoted from Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12. Baptism supposes the vital union of the candidate with Christ, and, as a result of this, our death and burial to sin with Him, and our resurrection with our risen Lord to a new and justified life, as well as the resurrection of our bodies at His glorious appearing in virtue of the same vital union. The ordinance of baptism thus embodies a full and distinct confession of faith, on points of fundamental and vital importance, and when intelligently understood, and prayerfully improved, is fraught with precious truth and rich encouragement to the candidate. It speaks of my living union with the unseen Saviour—of sin forever washed away in the baptismal floods through which He passed as my glorious substitute—of a life into which I have been quickened by the Holy Spirit—and of the certain consummation of my widest and highest hopes, in the resurrection of this poor frail body, fashioned like to Christ's glorious body, on the morning of the first resurrection, when the last enemy shall be vanquished and complete redemption effected. These are the teachings of this holy ordinance, which sprinkling has no fitness to symbolize, but which are emphatically and beautifully set forth in immersion. Sprinkling cannot represent death and resurrection, but immersion does, and hence the blessed teachings and encouragements of the ordinance are wholly lost to the church, where a human innovation has taken the place of a Divine institution.

I have to add to what I have already said, that I found such copious, spontaneous testimony from numbers of the most learned, pious, and eminent Pedo-Baptist divines, of all the various denominations, corroborating the correctness of these views, that, if I had any doubt of the correctness of my own conclusions, it would have been

sufficient to remove that doubt. Tholuck, one of the most learned and evangelical of German divines, remarks on Rom. vi. 4: "In order to understand the figurative use of baptism, we must bear in mind *the well-known fact that the candidate in the primitive church was immersed in water, and raised out of it again.*" Wesley says in a note on the same passage, "Buried with Him in Baptism, alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion." Barnes: "It is altogether probable that the allusion here is to the *custom of baptizing by immersion.*" I shall only add the testimony of perhaps the most brilliant light the modern Presbyterian church can boast—the late lamented Chalmers—who observes, in his lectures on Romans, referring to this verse: "*The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion, and though we regard it as a point of indifference whether the ordinance so named be performed in this way or by sprinkling, yet we doubt not that the prevalent style of administration, in the Apostles' days, was by an actual submerging of the whole body under water.*" A large volume might be compiled of concessions of candid Peppo-Baptists, who for a moment do not dispute the *scripturalness* of the Baptist position, whatever they may plead in support of their own practice.

I found, then, as the result of my enquiries into this subject, that my Greek Lexicons, many of the narratives of the New Testament baptisms, the phraseology used, and many of the circumstances attending these baptisms, and the declared figurative teaching of the ordinance, while perfectly silent on the subject of sprinkling, bore a most decided testimony to immersion as the only mode. As a believer in sprinkling I could not accommodate my theory to such expressions as these: "Jesus was baptized *of John in Jordan.*" (Mark i. 9.) "Buried with Him by baptism, &c." I could not find the word sprinkle given in any Lexicon as the meaning, or a meaning, of the Greek word for baptize, and I could not preach a sermon on the Divine

authority and symbolical teachings of sprinkling from any text in the Bible, that had the remotest connection with baptism. But as a believer in immersion, there is not a text in the Word of God bearing on the subject, narrative or doctrinal, which is not in perfect harmony with this mode; and I can search my Greek Lexicons, all compiled by believers in sprinkling, without encountering any collision with my theory, or meeting a single instance from classics or New Testament manifestly at variance with the doctrine of immersion. On which side, my reader, does the truth appear to be? For an honest examination, and corresponding action on the subject you and I shall have to answer one day before an infinitely higher tribunal than that of public opinion!

But the question might here be put to me, "If the evidence for immersion is so clear, how could you so long practise the opposite mode?" I must reply, in answer to this question, that I never did feel *fully* satisfied as to the evidence for sprinkling; and, hence, though I have frequently preached on the subject of infant baptism, or the right of infants to the ordinance, I have never preached a sermon on the mode. In common with all Pædo-Baptists, I always admitted the lawfulness of immersion, but justified the practice of sprinkling on the ground of expediency, the figurative baptism of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and that of Israel in the cloud and in the sea—(1 Cor. x. 2)—the "divers baptisms of Heb. ix. 10, which seemed to include certain ceremonial sprinklings. And in addition I looked upon the mode as a very secondary matter, not of much importance. With regard to the first and last of these positions I am convinced that we have nothing to do with expediency or inexpediency in regulating our practice, but simply *with what the Lord has commanded*; and what He has enjoined should be most rigidly adhered to. If He has commanded immersion, then immersion is *essential* to the ordinance

as far as the outward and visible is concerned, and I have no right to accept of anything else as a substitute because it is more convenient. And I am persuaded that He *has* enjoined immersion as the only mode, and has given us in His Word no warrant whatever for sprinkling. As to the baptism of the Holy Ghost, it is amazing to think how we are deceived by a perverted educational bias, and what blindness of mind is the result. I would ask any one to read the first part of Acts ii., and say whether there is anything to suggest the idea of sprinkling. The Spirit is poured out, and the symbol of His advent and His presence, in "a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind," *fills the house* where they were sitting. In the baptistry of His blessed influences they are immersed, and wholly subjected to those influences, as the baptized person is to the baptizing element. There is no idea whatever of sprinkling here, but only of total subjection to the Spirit's influence, which cannot be symbolized by the sprinkling of a few drops of water.

As to 1 Cor. x. 2, the Israelites were not *sprinkled in the* cloud and in the sea, but they were immersed, being covered all over, like the baptized person when immersed in the water.

As to Heb. ix. 10, one thing strikes me very forcibly. If the application of the word baptism in that verse, rendered "washings" in our version, is authority for applying the word to express sprinkling, why do none of the learned Pedo-Baptist lexicographers give the word the meaning of sprinkling in their dictionaries? Must it not be because, however anxious to prove that baptism may mean sprinkling, that they could not with a clear conscience set that down as one meaning of the word (*βαπτισμος*) *baptismos*. The most learned Pedo-Baptists, as Whitby, McKnight, Grotius, translate the expression "divers immersions," thus excluding from it any of the ceremonial sprinklings. The immersions of which the Apostle speaks in verse

10 of chapter 9, are clearly distinguished by the Apostle from the sprinklings, another class of ceremonial purifications of which he speaks in verses 19 and 21, where he is careful not to use the word (*βαπτισμος*) *baptismos*, but (*ραντισμος*) *rantizo*. What the "divers immersions" were, and the general rule by which they were conducted, we may learn by referring to Lev. xi. 32; Num. xxxi. 23. The things to be *baptized* were to be "*put into water*," and "*made to go through the water*." These "divers baptisms" were "divers immersions," and did not include any of the sprinklings of the old economy.

I have gone over the ground which engaged my attention during the progress of my investigations, and hope that a candid perusal of what I have said will fully justify me in the step I have taken, whatever may be the practical result in the case of the reader. The conclusions to which I have been led, I shall briefly state.

1.—The argument from the Abrahamic covenant affords no warrant whatever for infant baptism.

2.—The commission positively requires instruction and a reception of the truth *before* baptism; and baptism as a profession of discipleship. Hence infants are excluded from baptism by the commission, and all believers bound to be baptized.

3.—The example of the Apostles extends only to the baptism of professed believers. We have no proof that they ever baptized any but those whom they regarded as believers.

4.—All the incidental allusions to the ordinance suppose the baptized persons to have received the ordinance on a profession of faith.

5.—The word rendered baptize, never in the original meaning to sprinkle, but always to place wholly under the baptizing element, proves that sprinkling is not, but that immersion, and only immersion is the appointed mode.

6.—This mode is consistent with all the New Testa-

ment narratives of baptism, but sprinkling cannot be reconciled with some of these.

7.—Immersion alone is fitted to express the symbolical teachings of the ordinance, our death and resurrection with Christ; as the broken bread and out-poured wine in the other ordinance symbolically express the broken body and shed blood of Christ.

What I ask of you now, my reader, is that you will not treat this subject as a matter of trivial importance. Surely a conscientious regard to the revealed will of Christ will make you desirous to search the scriptures and see if these things are so. If, as Christians, we are in a proper frame of mind, our constant aim must be to know what is the mind of the Lord; and if we approach the Word of God in a humble, teachable spirit, the Lord will make both truth and duty plain to our minds.

Let not prejudice, from whatever source derived, turn you aside from the path of patient and prayerful enquiry. I know that the Baptists are accused of setting too much importance on baptism. Some of them may, perhaps, give a disproportionate prominence to the ordinance, as they or others may to any other particular truth. But surely you will admit that it is not wrong for them to contend earnestly for what they believe to be a Divine ordinance, and to feel grieved when they see what they cannot but regard as a tradition of men substituted in its place. But if anxious to see this primitive ordinance restored to its place in the church of Christ—and surely this they must be if they have a tender regard to the will of the Great Head of the church—not on that account do they attach any saving virtue to the baptismal waters. The Cross of Christ first—through the Cross, and only through the Cross, do they invite, can they receive the sinner to the baptism and to the table of the Lord.

Narrow and contracted men there may be among the Baptists, but where is the body of Christians in which you

will not find such? But it is not men, but principles and truth about which we ask you to judge. It would scarcely be a matter of wonder, if Baptists should have to struggle against the tendency to this extreme, considering the opposition they encounter on every side, and the constant reiteration against them, of the charge of bigotry and exclusiveness, with a confidence and persistency almost enough to make them think at length that it must be true. But this I can say, that I have found as warm, large-hearted Christians among them, and in as great proportion, as in any body of Christians with whom I have had intercourse. The idea that what is called their "close communion" views contract their sympathies is utterly unfounded. They simply believe, in common with the great body of Christians, that a professing Christian should be baptized before coming to the Lord's table; and in common with all evangelical denominations, they do not admit to the table of the Lord those whom they regard as unbaptized. Let your minds, my readers, be divested of prejudice from these and other sources, and let the questions before you for solution be, "Who are the proper subjects of Christian baptism?" and, "In what mode is this ordinance to be administered?" Be not turned aside from your main enquiry by any side issue. Satisfy yourself as to the testimony of the Word of God on these points, and minor difficulties will soon vanish. Above all, reverently and in the spirit of humble dependence on the Spirit of God for guidance, seek to know what saith the Lord in his word of truth. If you really desire to know the Lord's will, and submit to His teaching, you shall not be disappointed.

