

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH—ITS OBSERVANCE.

THIS may be learned, partly from the Decalogue itself, and partly from allusions to the subject in other parts of Scripture. The duty of keeping the Sabbath may be comprised in two parts—first, what we are to refrain from doing; secondly, what we are required to do.

I. We consider what we should REFRAIN FROM DOING on the Sabbath.

On this day we should refrain from all ordinary labor and worldly business. The law reads: "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates."

From this we learn, *first*, that the obligation of observing the Sabbath, with those who are householders or heads of families, extends to all under their control—to *children*, to *strangers*, or guests sojourning with them, and to domestic animals employed for purposes of labor. The law of the Sabbath forbids all ordinary work on the Lord's-day, holding the head of the house responsible for all under his control. The spirit of the law will not, however, forbid such acts of labor as may be necessarily connected with the duty of attendance upon the services of religion. Traveling to and from church, and the employment of animals for that purpose, are not here forbidden; but all such employments merely for business or visits of pleasure are plain violations of the Sabbatic institution.

The comment of our Saviour, however, while it sanctions the due observance of the Sabbath, according to the true spirit and design of the institution, condemns the extreme rigor with which the hypocritical Pharisees pretended to adhere to the letter of the Jewish law on the subject, while in reality they cared not for its spirit. He teaches clearly that works of *necessity* or *mercy* may properly be done on the Sabbath. Thus, the *necessary* preparation of food, both for man and beast, may lawfully be made on the Sabbath-day; but even this preparation, so far as it may conveniently be made on the day before, cannot be the

neglected and attended to on the Sabbath without a violation of the law. The visitation of the sick, or of the poor and needy, in order to do good to their souls or bodies, is a work appropriate for the Sabbath, and beautifully harmonizes with our Saviour's teaching, when he demands: "Is it lawful on the Sabbath-days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?" Luke vi. 9.

II. But we inquire, What are the POSITIVE DUTIES which the law of this institution requires us to perform on the Sabbath-day?

"Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy," is the divine injunction; but what is implied in *keeping it holy*?

1. It cannot be *kept holy*, when spent in idleness. Man was made for activity and usefulness. An idle drone can neither be happy himself nor useful to others. Although the Sabbath is a day of rest, in a certain sense—that is, of cessation from worldly pursuits—yet it is by no means a day of *inaction*, or *idleness*. This day can only be properly "hallowed" by being devoted strictly and fully to the worship of God and attendance upon religious duties. He who spends the Sabbath in idleness at home, or in reading or social conversation, when he has it in his power to attend upon the public worship of God, as *really* violates the Sabbath as the man who trades in his store or works in his shop or field.

One design of the Sabbath is, to furnish for both man and beast a needed repose from bodily toil; another design is, to set apart one day of seven for special devotion to public worship and other religious duties. Now it is just as essential to the proper observance of the Sabbath to attend to one division of these duties as the other; hence we are no more at liberty to neglect public worship, and pretend that we are keeping holy the Sabbath, because we merely abstain from "doing ordinary work therein," and from "buying or selling," than we are to pursue our ordinary worldly business on that day, and suppose that, because we spend a portion of it in attendance upon public worship, we are properly keeping the Sabbath. When prevented from attending public worship by affliction, or other providential causes, the Sabbath may be properly observed by "searching the Scriptures," reading good books, or performing other works of piety; but when not thus prevented, we cannot neglect the public services of the sanctuary without violating the spirit of the Sabbatic law.

2. The practice of thus hallowing the Sabbath, by devoting a portion of it to the public service of God, not only grows out of the *design* of the institution itself, but is sanctioned by the example of our Saviour, who regularly attended the services of the temple or the synagogue

on the Sabbath-day. It is also in accordance with the example of the apostles and first Christians, who statedly met for public worship on "the Lord's-day;" nor can it be neglected without violating the apostolic injunction: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together."

The attendance upon *family* and *private devotion* not being peculiarly duties of the Sabbath, but alike obligatory upon all days, will not be particularly considered here, but we will conclude this chapter by some general reflections on the beneficial tendency of the institution.

III. *The BENEFITS derived from the Sabbath.*

1. The proper observance of the Sabbath is a great blessing, even *in a temporal point of view*. Here we realize the truth of our Saviour's words: "The Sabbath was made for man." He who created man knew his nature, and gave him this institution to meet one of his constitutional necessities. Such is the nature of both our mental and bodily powers, that they cannot, without injury, be overtaxed with labor; and such is the natural cupidity, avarice, and ambition of fallen humanity, that most persons, but for the restrictions of the Sabbath, would devote themselves so incessantly to mental or bodily toil as greatly to enervate and impair their powers, if not entirely to destroy them, and bring on premature superannuation or untimely death. And if men would thus be led to overtax their own powers, how much more certainly would they overwork their servants and their animals! Hence, if there were no command making the observance of the Sabbath a duty, such an institution would be a wise and judicious arrangement, merely as a measure of State policy or worldly prudence.

2. But the *benefits* of this institution, *in a social, moral, and religious point of view, are incalculably great.*

The Sabbath, with its religious services, by bringing the people of any community together at regular and frequent intervals, naturally tends to cultivate among them a better acquaintance with each other, and thus to create a mutual sympathy and community of interest; while, at the same time, that spirit of selfishness so naturally resulting from an isolated state would be counteracted, and a feeling of unity and brotherhood, of friendly assimilation and social attachment, would necessarily ensue.

Again, when we reflect on the pure and sublime themes so constantly kept before the religious assemblies on the Lord's-day, and the ruinous tendency of those habits of idleness and dissipation which would naturally result from the neglect of this institution, how numerous and great must those benefits appear which, even in a social and moral view of

the subject, flow from the Sabbatic institution—with its oft-recurring solemn and orderly assemblies, its songs and its prayers, its lectures and its sermons!

But look especially at the directly religious tendency of the Sabbath. Since men are so prone to forget God and neglect religion, under circumstances the most favorable, how greatly would this irreligious proclivity be enhanced by a withdrawal of the influences of the Sabbath! There is a sacred stillness which marks this consecrated day—a solemnity connected with the “sound of the church-going bell” and its peacefully-assembling multitudes—that all must feel and acknowledge. Under these influences thousands of the thoughtless and the gay are led to the house of God, and thus brought within reach of the blessed word; and in this way each returning Sabbath numbers its multitudes reclaimed from vice, and washed and sanctified by redeeming grace, to swell the numbers of the saints on earth, and prepare them for the mansions on high. Blot from existence the holy Sabbath, with all its sacred associations and influences, and how appalling the consequences that would ensue!

Finally, the Sabbath is *beneficial as a type of the heavenly rest*. Such it was, doubtless, in its original appointment, such it was to the saints in ancient times, such it has ever been to the Christian Church, and such it will continue to be while time endures. How strengthening to the faith, and how encouraging to the hope, of the believer must be this oft-recurring rest! Buffeted by adverse winds and waves, faint-hearted and cast down, persecuted and afflicted, with what joy must the weary pilgrim hail this day of sacred rest and worship, which so forcibly reminds him of that “rest that remaineth to the people of God”!

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IX.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. From what parts of Scripture may this duty be learned?</p> <p>2. What should we refrain from doing on the Sabbath?</p> <p>3. What is a peculiar duty of householders?</p> <p>4. What does the Saviour condemn in reference to the Jewish method of observing the Sabbath?</p> <p>5. What is the first thing named as implied in keeping the Sabbath?</p> | <p>6. Does this duty imply attendance upon divine worship?</p> <p>7. By whose example is this duty sanctioned?</p> <p>8. What temporal blessings result from the observance of the Sabbath?</p> <p>9. What are the social blessings connected with this institution?</p> <p>10. What benefits of a moral and religious character result from it?</p> <p>11. What are its typical uses?</p> |
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PART III.—THE MORALS OF CHRISTIANITY.

BOOK III.—OUR DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBOR.

CHAPTER X.

OUR DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBOR—ITS GENERAL PRINCIPLES CONSIDERED.

AGREEABLY to our Lord's comment on the moral law, our duty to God, which we have already considered, was embraced in the *first* of the two tables of stone, and our duty to our neighbor in the *second*. The former is all fulfilled in *loving God supremely*; the latter in *loving our neighbor as ourselves*.

To the latter branch of this duty, or to the second table of the Decalogue, we now call attention. In our Saviour's epitomized presentation of the moral law, the six commandments of the second table are all comprised in this sentence, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and also in our Saviour's golden rule (Matt. vii. 12).

St. Paul comments on the moral law in perfect accordance with our Saviour's teachings. He says: "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. xiii. 8-10.

Thus it appears that all moral obligation—our duty to God, ourselves, and others—is comprised in one word—LOVE. Here is the grand center and source whence all duty is derived—love to God and love to man. How sublimely simple and comprehensive is this comment of Christ; and how beautiful the illustration of St. Paul! In considering

this moral code, so far as it relates to *our love to our neighbor*, two things are to be noticed—

I. THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES EMBRACED.

II. THEIR APPLICATION TO SPECIAL CASES AND CONDITIONS.

In this chapter we will consider *the general principles embraced*.

These are all comprised in the six commandments of the second table; and no more simple and correct method of analyzing and illustrating the subject can be adopted than to consider each of these commandments separately.

I. The *fifth* commandment—the *first* in the second table—reads thus: “Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” Ex. xx. 12.

Although this commandment only specifies the duty of children to parents, yet, according to its scope and bearing, it should be understood as covering the whole ground, not only of the obligation of children to parents, and of parents to children, but of inferiors to superiors, and of superiors to inferiors. As the general duty here enjoined will be particularly considered under our next general division, to avoid repetition, we omit its discussion here.

II. The sixth commandment is, “Thou shalt not kill.”

1. This commandment *forbids* the taking of life—either our own, or that of our fellow-creatures—except in case of *public justice* by process of law, necessary *self-defense*, or *justifiable war* lawfully waged.

In reference to the first exception here specified, there can be little controversy. All will admit that, for a capital offense, the law of the land may rightfully take the life of the criminal. This is only carrying out the ancient precept delivered to Noah and his family: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” Gen. ix. 6.

It must also be understood that *treason*, because it is of the essence of murder, and necessarily leads to its commission, is here constructively embraced as a crime included with murder, and may rightfully be involved in the same penalty of forfeiture of life.

But as to crimes and misdemeanors of less magnitude, and for the perpetration of which there is no warrant in the word of God for inflicting the penalty of death, should any State attach such penalty, and the officers of the law carry out the sentence and execution accordingly, the State itself then becomes the violator of the sixth commandment, by taking the life of man without authority from God who gave it.

In a case of this kind, the State itself is the offender in the sight of Heaven, and, as may be apprehended, will, sooner or later, be visited with judicial punishment. There can be no question that it is the

duty of all civil officers, whether judicial or executive, while holding office under government, to carry out the constitution and laws of that government faithfully, according to their official oath; and, so long as they are not convinced of any discrepancy between the civil and the divine law, they are blameless in so doing. But should they be required, as civil officers, to sanction or perform what they are convinced is contrary to the law of God, then they can no longer act as officers of the law without being identified with the State as *particeps criminis*. Their only proper remedy then is, "for conscience' sake," to resign.

2. That *self-defense*, when our own lives are attacked or in imminent danger, is a duty, there can be no question. The law of nature dictates it. Nor is it inconsistent with the duty of "loving our neighbor as ourselves." Yet even the plea of self-defense cannot justify us in taking the life of another person unless that self-defense be strictly necessary, and not brought about by our own willful act. If we have voluntarily brought the difficulty or danger upon ourselves, or if we can see a way of escape from it by any other means, we cannot, without guilt, save ourselves by destroying others.

3. It is generally conceded that the taking of life in *war* is not murder. St. Paul says: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God" Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

Human governments, then, are the ordinance of God—not, however in such sense that God sanctions all their principles or measures. They are frequently cruel, unjust, and vicious. As such, God may tolerate, but he cannot sanction or approve them. Yet that human governments should exist, notwithstanding their imperfections, is according to the divine will, and that, as a general rule, they should be treated with respect and submission, is also a maxim of revelation; but as, in the nature of things, human governments in the present state of the world cannot be maintained without war, it necessarily follows that war is sometimes justifiable; and if so, then the taking of life in war, according to the rules of honorable warfare, is not a violation of this commandment.

But if the war, though justifiable in itself, be conducted on principles of cruelty, and human life be wantonly and uselessly destroyed, contrary to the rules of honorable warfare, so far as this is the case, the taking of life in war is as really murder as in any other instance.

Again, if the war itself be unjustifiable—if it be commenced and carried on through wicked motives, merely through worldly pride and

ambition—through the lust of power or gain, or to gratify a spirit of revenge—in all such cases, the war, from beginning to end, is but a wholesale murder—it is a plain violation of the precept, “Thou shalt not kill.”

In an unjustifiable war, the nation bringing it on is guilty of a national offense against God and man, for which, as a nation, they will be likely to be visited with condign punishment. The individuals composing the nation waging such a war, so far as they may voluntarily engage in it, with a proper understanding of its character, are personal violators of the sixth commandment, and are really guilty of murder; but so far as their participation is not *voluntary*, but unavoidable, they are individually innocent or excusable.

4 Once more: This command, “Thou shalt not kill,” also expressly prohibits—

Dueling.—There is no mode of reasoning by which this sin can be made to appear in any better light than that of *willful murder*. It sets aside, on the ground of mere custom, fashion, pride, or prejudice, the express statute of Heaven. It treats with contempt the “image of God”—in which man was created. It combines, in a single act, both suicide and the murder of our fellow-being.

Dueling may properly be classed with the barbarisms of the dark ages. The law of *honor*, falsely so called, from which it claims its sanction, has nothing in reason or revelation to sustain it. It is alike repugnant to the teachings of both—it can have no tendency to decide the matter of quarrel between the combatants. Nor can it be a test of true bravery; for he who has the firmness and heroism to decline a contest in the face of the scoff and ridicule of the ungodly multitude, rather than do a wrong act, gives evidence of more real courage than he could give by hazarding his life and that of his antagonist in a duel.

If a man falls in a duel, he has murdered himself without law or reason, but in opposition to the dictates of both; and, in many cases, rashly and sinfully abandoned his post of responsibility as the guardian, protector, and support, of a helpless family. If he kills his antagonist, he has murdered his fellow-man, and perhaps thus thrown *his* helpless widow and orphans adrift upon the world in a state of dependence and want. If neither falls, both are guilty, in intent, of both suicide and murder, in the common sense of the term. And in either case, and whatever may be the issue, the duelist has planted in his conscience a thorn that will pierce his soul with anguish while life endures, if not forever and ever. And for what good end are all these evils evoked?

Who is benefited? What law of God or of reason has been honored? It is but a sacrifice of the dearest interests of humanity upon the altar of folly and madness.

5. *Suicide*.—Some of the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers at times expressed very correct notions in reference to this crime. Plato says: "We men are all by the appointment of God in a certain prison, or custody, which we ought not to break out of, or run away." Cicero says: "God, the supreme governor of all things, forbids us to depart hence without his order. All pious men ought to have patience to continue in the body as long as God shall please who sent us hither; and not force themselves out of the world before he calls for them, lest they be found deserters of the station appointed them by God." But Cicero, in another place, appears as the apologist of this crime, and Seneca was also its advocate; while Demosthenes, Cato, Brutus, and Cassius, all encouraged it by their example. Hence it is manifest that the Bible alone can establish us firmly on the right foundation in reference to this question.

That the divine law, as exhibited in the sixth commandment, clearly prohibits suicide, may be seen both from the letter and spirit of that precept, "Thou shalt not kill." Surely, to take my own life is as literal a transgression of this law as to take the life of my neighbor! Our Saviour's version of the law, "Thou shalt do *no* murder," is still more emphatic in the prohibition of suicide and every conceivable species of murder.

The fact that the Mosaic law specifies no penalty against the crime of suicide, is no proof that *it* was not included with every other species of murder. This crime, from its very nature, places him who commits it at once beyond the reach of all human law. Of course, to annex a penalty, under such circumstances, would involve an absurdity—an utter impossibility. He who takes his own life, can only be punished for that offense by Him who is the author of life, and to whom all are accountable for this guilt.

The precept of our Saviour, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*," plainly prohibits suicide. If, as all admit, this language forbids the taking of the life of *our neighbor*, *because* we would thereby exhibit less love to our neighbor than we have for ourselves, it is necessarily implied that self-murder is forbidden, *because*, by performing this act, we would show less love to *ourselves* than we are required to exercise toward *our neighbor*. Hence, as the precept implies a similarity or correspondence between our love for *ourselves* and our *neighbor*, if it forbid the taking of the life of our neighbor, it must also prohibit suicide.

Again as the taking of human life, as a penalty annexed to crime, can only be justified on the principle of necessity, in view of maintaining just government over mankind in a state of political association, it follows—as self-murder cannot be placed on the ground of a similar necessity, in view of the maintenance of society, and personal security and happiness therein—that therefore it can only be contemplated as a crime, alike repugnant to the letter and spirit of both natural and divine law, though in its nature not susceptible of punishment by human penalty.

Again, the reason assigned in Scripture rendering the crime of taking human life so heinous and offensive, applies as forcibly to suicide as to any other description of murder—“Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man.” Now, is it not clear that, as the turpitude of the crime of “shedding man’s blood” results from the fact that he was “made in the image of God,” and as this applies alike to every individual of the race—from these reasons is it not clear that suicide is as emphatically condemned as the “shedding of man’s blood” under any circumstances whatever?

6. According to the admitted maxim, that “the greater comprehends the less,” the command, “Thou shalt not kill,” not only prohibits murder, but all offenses of less magnitude whose natural tendency leads to the perpetration of murder.

Under this head may be embraced—*sinful anger, hatred or malice, revenge, strife, excess*—in relation to food, drink, or labor—*unnecessary exposure of our own life or that of others, and the neglect of the necessary means of preserving life*, under any circumstances.

(1) *Sinful Anger*.—As the indulgence in this often results in murder, it is forbidden by this commandment. Although it cannot be supposed that the pure and holy nature of God is susceptible of anger, as a perturbing or agitating passion, in the sense in which this emotion often exists in man, yet, as in his nature he is immovably opposed to sin, this fixed opposition—this holy disapprobation and hatred of sin, and determination to punish the sinner—are expressed in Scripture by the term “anger;” hence we read, “God is *angry* with the wicked every day.” From this fact we may rationally infer that *anger* is not, under all circumstances, sinful; but that, in the sense in which it is commonly indulged, it is sinful, and in direct antagonism to the great law of love in which the essence of Christianity is embraced, is clearly set forth in the Bible. St. Paul says: “Let all bitterness, and *wrath*, and *anger*, and clamor, be put away from you, with all *malice*.” Eph. iv. 31. In the same apostle’s enumeration of “the works of the flesh,” he embraces

not only "murders," but also *strife, variance, hatred, and wrath*. And St. John testifies: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." 1 John iii. 15. Anger, if permitted to carry us beyond a calm and holy indignation against sin, or if allowed a permanent lodgment in the heart, becomes sinful and pernicious, destroying the peace of him who indulges in it, and divesting him of that amiability of temper and behavior which is essential to the Christian character.

(2) *Revenge* is also interdicted by this law. St. Paul says: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. . . . Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans xii. 17, 19-21. How attractive, how sublime, are the mild precepts of the gospel, when contrasted with the selfishness and cruelty of human philosophy! Lord, endue us with that mind "which was also in Christ Jesus"!

(3) *Strife, contention, disputation, and quarreling*, originating in an unholy temper, and conducted in a vainglorious or ambitious spirit, are forbidden by this law, and are inconsistent with Christian character, and hurtful to society. "Follow *peace* with all men" (Heb. xii. 14) is the gospel rule. And again: "Do all things without *murmurings and disputings*." Phil. ii. 14. Again: "Let nothing be done through *strife* or vainglory." Phil. ii. 3. St. Paul also (2 Cor. xii. 20) speaks in condemnation of "*envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults*," showing that all such things are uncongenial to the spirit of Christianity.

(4) In a word, this commandment prohibits all *injurious excess* tending to the enervation or destruction of the health, vigor, and activity of our bodily powers or mental faculties. This not only interdicts all drunkenness and dissipation, in the common acceptation of the term, but also excess in the use of food, in labor, in recreation, or amusement, or whatever would tend to impair the constitution, or deprive us of the possession of *mens sana in corpore sano*—a sound mind in a healthy body.

(5) Again, if we neglect the means which we believe to be essential to the preservation of our own lives, or the lives of others, and life is lost through that neglect, we are guilty of murder. If we see a blind man, unconscious of his danger, about to step over a precipice where he will inevitably be destroyed, and have it in our power to save his life, either by giving him timely warning, or by pulling him from the dan-

ger, and fail to do so, we are as really guilty of murder as though we had directly taken his life by our own overt act. "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law!"

III. "THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY."

The sin here forbidden, embracing every violation of the laws of conjugal fidelity, and of chastity in general, will be considered in connection with the obligations pertaining to the conjugal relation. Hence we will not enter upon the subject in this connection.

IV. "THOU SHALT NOT STEAL."

Under the head of *theft*, as the term is here used, much more is implied than the overt act of stealing in the sense of the civil law. In a legal sense, *to steal* is to take from another his property, goods, money, or possessions, in a secret and fraudulent manner. It differs from robbery, in that the one is performed in a secret or hidden manner, and the other by violence or force.

But as the divine law penetrates more deeply, and scrutinizes more closely, than civil statutes can do, having cognizance of the secret thought as well as the overt act, it is understood here not only to forbid the crime of *theft*, in its literal, civil acceptation, but also *robbery*, the receiving of stolen property, knowing it to be such, all fraudulent dealing—using false weights and measures, removing landmarks, injustice or unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, any breach of trust, any act of oppression, extortion, bribery, unjust and vexatious litigation, trespassing upon property, engrossing commodities so as to enhance the price, gaming, or any other method of taking from others their property or possessions, without due and adequate compensation for the same. How full and comprehensive is the law of God as here exhibited; and with what simplicity and beauty is it expressed by our Saviour in his golden rule of "doing to others as we would that they should do unto us"!

It may be a question of some doubt whether the crime of *slander* more properly falls under the condemnation of *this* or the *next* commandment, which prohibits false testimony. It seems clearly condemned by both precepts. As it speaks falsely against our neighbor, it is "bearing false witness," and is condemned by the *ninth* commandment; but as it thereby *steals* away his *good name*, which is "rather to be chosen than great riches," it properly comes under the head of *theft*. It is written: "Whoso privily *slandereth* his neighbor, him will I cut off." Ps. ci. 5. In describing wicked apostates who were to come, St. Paul gives it as one of their characteristics, that they will be found "speaking *lies* in hypocrisy." 1 Tim. iv. 2. And he says to the Ephesians

(iv. 31): "Let all evil speaking be put away from you." In describing the atrocities of the unconverted pagans, he characterizes them as "back-biters." Rom. i. 30. The crime of slander has been forcibly described in the familiar lines of the poet—

"Good name in man or woman
Is the immediate jewel of their souls
Who *steals* my purse *steals* trash;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."

"Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law!"

V. "THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR."

This, like all the other precepts of the divine law, grows out of the principle of *love*. Hence, as we should "love our neighbor as ourselves," we should take the same care to refrain from speaking so as to injure him, either in his property or reputation, as we would take in reference to ourselves.

This duty forbids, not only testifying falsely against our neighbor when called on to render legal evidence, but also condemns falsehood and deception in every shape. It prohibits forgery, concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause; all tale-bearing, whispering, detracting; all rash, harsh, and unjust censuring—it condemns all concealing, excusing, or extenuating sins, and all raising or circulating false rumors, and even all countenancing evil reports concerning our neighbor, whether true or false, when the object is, not to do good to others, but injury to him. "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law!"

VI. "THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE, THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR'S WIFE, NOR HIS MAN-SERVANT, NOR HIS MAID-SERVANT, NOR HIS OX, NOR HIS ASS, NOR ANY THING THAT IS THY NEIGHBOR'S."

This commandment is directly opposed to that *love of the world* which is represented by St. John as inconsistent with the love of God. "If any man love the world," saith the apostle, "the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John ii. 15. To *covet*, is *earnestly to desire* or long after an object, that we may possess and enjoy it. It may be taken in a good sense, as in the passage, "Covet earnestly the best gifts;" but when it has for its object the property of our neighbor, and amounts to a desire unlawfully to possess that which belongs to another, it is founded in practical injustice, and is one of the most widely-extended and pernicious

sins. It is at the root of nearly all dishonesty and fraud. Indeed, it comprehends "the love of money," which, the apostle teaches, "is the root of all evil." 1 Tim. vi. 10. As an eminent author has said: "This is a most excellent moral precept, the observance of which will prevent all public crimes; for he who feels the force of the law that prohibits the inordinate desire of any thing that is the property of another, can never make a breach in the peace of society by an act of wrong to any of even its feeblest members." "Lord have mercy upon us, and write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee."

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER X.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. In what is our duty to our neighbor embraced?</p> <p>2. How is this proved by both Christ and St. Paul?</p> <p>3. What two things are here to be considered?</p> <p>4. What is embraced in the scope of the sixth commandment?</p> <p>5. What does it forbid?</p> <p>6. When is <i>war</i> justifiable, and when is <i>an individual</i> justifiable for engaging in it?</p> | <p>7. Why does this law prohibit <i>dueling</i>?</p> <p>8. Does it prohibit <i>suicide</i>? and wherefore?</p> <p>9. What sins of less magnitude does this law prohibit?</p> <p>10. What is included under the head of <i>theft</i>?</p> <p>11. What under the head of <i>bearing false witness</i>?</p> <p>12. What under the head of <i>covetousness</i>?</p> |
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CHAPTER XI.

OUR DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBOR—APPLICATION OF THE LAW TO SPECIAL CASES AND CONDITIONS—HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

WE now proceed to consider the principles of righteousness embraced in the law of love to our neighbor in their *application to some of the most important relations in life.*

I. The first of these RELATIONS to which we call attention is that subsisting between HUSBAND AND WIFE.

1. Its *propriety.*

(1) This relation dates its *origin* from the commencement of our race. Amid the peaceful bowers of paradise, when sin as yet had not disturbed the harmony or tarnished the beauty of the fair creation, when all was innocence, purity, and love, even *then*, "The Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Gen. ii. 18.

Here, we behold the origin of this endearing relation, around which cluster the most sacred obligations and hallowed enjoyments of life. It is founded on the will and appointment of God, and is as much adapted to the nature of man as the rays of light to the eye. As this beautiful organ of the human body would be useless and unmeaning but for the light that falls upon it, so there are important faculties of our complex nature which can only be developed and exercised in connection with the conjugal relation.

When Eve was formed from the rib of Adam, it was said: "She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." It is added: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." Here, the fact that the material substance of which woman was formed was extracted from man indicates an imperfection of his nature resulting from that extraction, which could only be remedied by a restoration of the abstracted substance; not, however, in the shape of a literal rib, as when taken from him, but as a "help meet for him," a more highly-refined organism of human nature, which, after having received the

polish of passing the second time through the creative hands, was to be restored to him as "bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh." So that, in return for a small portion of his material composition, he receives as part of his nature a "help meet for him"—a woman, a wife—superabundantly restoring what he had lost, and enhancing the perfection of his nature and the extent of his enjoyment.

(2) The *propriety and general obligation* of this conjugal relation not only appear from the history of its origin, as just referred to, but are evident from the *native instincts of humanity*. The natural attraction of love between the sexes, independent of any direct precept to that effect, as a general rule, will secure the adoption of the marriage state. And as it does not appear that this obligation was intended to be *universal*, but only a duty of general bearing, admitting of exceptions, the instincts of nature alone are sufficient to secure its general observance.

(3) Again, the *exceptions* to the obligation to enter upon the marriage state may arise from two different considerations:

First. The bond of this obligation can only legitimately spring from the emotion of love, or the preference of the affections; hence it follows that in the absence of this state of affection between the parties, the entrance upon the marriage state, so far from being a duty, would rather be a profanation of the institution.

Secondly. Poverty, affliction, or any insurmountable barrier in the way of attending to the duties connected with the married relation, may render the entrance upon it improper. In times of great persecution or calamity, it may be injudicious for some persons to assume the increased responsibilities which this relation involves; or individuals, as was the case with St. Paul, may feel it their duty to engage in some special service for the Church, which could scarcely be properly performed by one encumbered by the duties and cares of the married relation. But, under all ordinary circumstances, it is clear, as well from reason as Scripture, that marriage is a duty, and those cases in which it is not are *exceptions* to the general rule; and such exceptions are only valid when it is clear that this important relation would necessarily conflict with other obligations more important in their nature, or imperiously binding in their character.

2. The *advantages* resulting from the marriage institution are so obvious and great that they need not be dwelt upon. Without the family relation necessarily connected with this institution, all the cherished endearments clustering around the home circle, uniting parents and children, and brothers and sisters, in fondest affection, would be lost.

Destroy this sacred institution, and the foundation of parental care for children is removed, and all that tender attention and nurture so essential to the proper training of the young is also destroyed, and children are left to grow up, like "the wild ass's colt," in utter neglect and ignorance, unfitted for the enjoyment of happiness, or for any station of usefulness in society.

3. *The duties pertaining to the conjugal state* are important and obvious.

(1) *Mutual fidelity and affection* are required. This grows out of the very nature of the institution. Indeed, if husband and wife are not under mutual obligations of fidelity and affection toward each other, in what does the import or propriety of marriage consist? The very nature of marriage implies a pledge to this effect, and every dereliction from the faithful performance of this vow is a profanation of the institution.

Not only the nature and design of the institution require mutual fidelity and love on the part of husband and wife, binding each to the other alone, and prohibiting the practice of *polygamy*, but such is also the plain teaching of the Bible. Hence we read, in the second chapter of Genesis, at the very birth of the institution: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and *shall cleave unto his wife*; and they shall be *one flesh*." It does not read *wives*, but *wife*—in the singular; hence, polygamy is here explicitly interdicted.

And it is evident, from the teaching of Christ, that the occasional toleration, or rather *sufferance*, of polygamy, in the patriarchal age, was no repeal of the laws of the institution as given in the commencement.

Our Saviour says, when interrogated by his disciples on the subject of divorce: "Have ye not read, that he which made them *at the beginning* made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and *shall cleave to his wife*; and *they twain shall be one flesh*? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives; but *from the beginning it was not so*. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Matt. xix. 4-9.

The general tenor of Scripture in both Testaments is against polyg-

amy. The marriage relation is constantly referred to by the terms *husband* and *wife*, each in the *singular*. One passage, in confirmation of this position, we present from the Old Testament: "Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the *wife* of thy youth, against whom thou has dealt treacherously; yet is *she* thy *companion*, and the *wife* of thy covenant. And did not he make *one* (one woman)? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore *one*?" The answer is, "That he might seek a godly seed." Here the practice of polygamy is shown to be in explicit contravention of the original institution. And the *reason* on which the law is founded is referred to as relating to the character of the offspring, thus affirming the fact that polygamy tends to the deterioration of children.

Again, *nature herself* is against polygamy. The generally admitted fact, that the number of *male* births in all countries is only to a small extent in excess of the number of *female* births (as if to balance against the greater exposure of the male sex to death by war and other casualties), is a forcible indication that nature has designed but *one woman* for *one man*, while both are living.

Once more, the fact that marriage is properly founded on mutual love between the parties—which, in its true character, can only subsist in the heart of woman or man toward *one person* at the same time—renders polygamy utterly irreconcilable with the nature of the requisite conjugal affection.

Marriage being originally an appointment of God, and the duties pertaining to that relation being prescribed in Scripture, it is properly a *divine* institution. But since civil law may enact regulations concerning the performance of these duties, so far as these regulations are consistent with the divine law, and relate to external duties properly cognizable by civil enactments, it may therefore be admitted that marriage is also, in one sense, and to a limited extent, a *civil* regulation.

In connection with the mutual fidelity and affection required by the law of God between husband and wife may be considered the crime of *adultery*, which is so expressly prohibited by this law, whether as set forth in the Decalogue or other parts of the Scripture; and also all manner of inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, fornication, sinful lust, and every violation of that purity and chastity of heart and life which Christianity enjoins. All such deviations from the principles of holiness, whether in the overt act or only in the purpose or desire of the heart, are expressly condemned by the moral law of God.

(2) But between *husband and wife* there are other obligations of kindred nature specified in Scripture. Thus it is the duty of the husband to be the *guardian, protector, and comforter* of his wife; and of the wife to *reverence, honor, and obey* her husband.

These reciprocal duties are beautifully portrayed by St. Paul. He illustrates the endearing relation between husband and wife by the union between Christ and his Church. His language is: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it. . . . So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church. . . . For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife; and they two shall be one flesh. . . . Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife, even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." Eph. v. 22-33.

Here the *husband* is taught to *love, nourish, and cherish* his wife as his own flesh, "even as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it." How intimate the relation, and how great the affection it enjoins!

But the *wife* is taught to *reverence* and be *submissive* to her husband; yea, "to be subject to her own husband in every thing, as the Church is subject unto Christ." How deep must be the reverence, and how unbounded the confidence, where such implicit submission is required! But where the union is founded upon that mutual love which should hallow the conjugal bond, there is no disquieting restraint, nothing displeasing or servile in connection with these duties, but all becomes a sweet and living pleasure—a perennial source of enjoyment and bliss.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XI.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Under what circumstances did the conjugal relation originate?</p> <p>2. By what do the propriety and obligation of this relation appear?</p> <p>3. Is the obligation to enter upon this relation universal?</p> <p>4. By what circumstances may this obligation be annulled?</p> <p>5. What are some of the benefits of this relation?</p> <p>6. What are the prominent duties connected with it?</p> | <p>7. What is the Bible testimony respecting polygamy?</p> <p>8. What is the voice of nature on the subject?</p> <p>9. In what respect is marriage a <i>divine</i>, and in what sense a <i>civil</i>, institution?</p> <p>10. What is embraced in the law against adultery?</p> <p>11. How is the marriage relation illustrated by St. Paul?</p> <p>12. What are the reciprocal duties of husbands and wives?</p> |
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CHAPTER XII.

OUR DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBOR—APPLICATION OF THE LAW TO SPECIAL CASES AND CONDITIONS—PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

WE next consider the relation subsisting between parents and children. This is another domestic relation, intimately connected with the one already examined, pertaining to husband and wife.

I. DUTIES OF PARENTS TO THEIR CHILDREN.

Although some of these duties grow so naturally out of the relation itself that they may be partially discovered by the mere light of nature, and all of them, when correctly understood, may be corroborated by human reason, yet as revelation, our only all-sufficient and infallible guide, is full and explicit upon this important question, we appeal directly to that more ample and authoritative source.

1. *Protection and support are duties of parents to their children.*

That these obligations were recognized under the patriarchal dispensation is evident from Scripture. Jacob said to Laban: "For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the Lord hath blessed thee since my coming; and now, *when shall I provide for mine own house also?*" Gen. xxx. 30. St. Paul says to Timothy: "But if any *provide not for his own*, and specially for *those of his own house*, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." 1 Tim. v. 8.

The plain duty of parents, to protect and exercise a tender care over their children, and to provide for their comfortable support, is abundantly taught in the scriptures adduced. It is not only a dictate of nature, taught by the love of parents for their offspring, and enforced even by the instinctive regard of the inferior animal creation for their young, but it forms so essential an element in Christian character that he who neglects or disregards it is denounced as having "denied the faith," and being "worse than an infidel"—that is, he is to be contemned as unworthy the Christian name; hence every parent is bound to the full discharge of this obligation, to the extent of his ability. While he is not allowed by Christianity to lavish upon his children superflu-

ities, or to deal his bounty toward them with an extravagant or wasteful hand, yet he should use his utmost diligence and industry to furnish them all necessary protection, support, and comfort.

2. *Love is another important parental duty.*

This duty is not only enforced by one of the strongest dictates of nature, but it is frequently referred to in Scripture. The prophet exclaims: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" Isa. xlix. 15. And the Psalmist says: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Ps. ciii. 13. Again, the same idea of the tender compassion of the parental heart is thus expressed by the prophet: "And I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Mal. iii. 17. Again, how forcibly does our Saviour refer to the strength of this parental affection, when he demands: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?" etc. Luke xi. 11.

That the Scriptures do not so much command the duty of parental affection, in express words, as refer to it as a matter whose existence is not to be questioned, renders the obligation but the more palpable, and marks the crime of a parent who may fail in the discharge of this duty as one of the deepest dye.

3. *The next duty of parents to their children which we shall notice, is that of their training and education.*

That God, under all dispensations, holds parents to strict responsibility for the training and education of their children is evident from the Scriptures.

In the eighteenth chapter of Genesis, Abraham is highly commended of the Lord for the strict religious discipline by which he commanded and controlled "his children and his household after him."

In delivering the law to the Israelites, Moses enjoined upon parents the duty of attending rigidly to the training of their children. His language is: "And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. vi. 6, 7.

In attestation of the importance of this duty, the wise man has given us this proverb: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Prov. xxii. 6.

St. Paul enjoins upon parents to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," Eph. vi. 4.

The religious training of Timothy, traced back first to his mother Eunice, and then to his grandmother Lois, is referred to by St. Paul as a great blessing (2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 15).

It is a matter of vast importance that we have correct views in reference to the nature of that education and training which it is the duty of parents to bestow upon their children. Education implies the development and culture of our *physical, intellectual, and moral* powers. When its benefits are fully realized, the utmost attainable perfection and fruition of our complex nature are secured. In the common mode of speech, education is understood to relate almost exclusively to the scientific and literary training derived from schools. But while we would by no means depreciate that species of education constituting the principal part of academic and collegiate instruction, it must be admitted that it can be but secondary to moral and religious culture. Science, in the common import of that term, is chiefly, if not solely, valuable as being a handmaid to religion. It is the lesser light borrowing, like the moon from the sun, her paler rays from revelation; and should be pursued as tending to promote religion, and so pursued that it may tend in that way.

In our original creation, the hand of God hath stamped upon the constitution of our nature the deep impress of immortality. This timent of clay is ever tending to dissolution and the tomb, but the soul kindles with the glowing pledge of its immortality. This life is but the commencement of our existence. Compared with the immense expanse of eternity, it is far less than the mote which floats in the sunbeam. It is but a microscopic speck amid the boundless universe. *Can* it be wisdom to attend to the present short-lived moment, the transient *now*, to the neglect of the infinite future? to become dazzled and overwhelmed with the gewgaws of a moment, while all that is truly great, or noble, or real, or lasting, or good, is overlooked or despised? It is our great business in this life to prepare for happiness in a future and eternal state. Our chief end is "to glorify God, and enjoy him forever."

But what, we inquire, is the character of that training essential to the attainment of this glorious consummation? The answer is at hand. It is mainly the *training of the heart*. It relates to the principles, the experience, and the practice of true religion. By this we mean not a mere culture of the head, but also a purification of the heart and regulation of the life. If we fail in securing this culture, what training soever we may receive beside, we are only trained up for the society of fiends and the wailings of the finally lost. On the other hand, if we secure this moral and religious culture in its proper and full sense,

whatsoever training we may lack beside, the grand purpose of our being will be realized, the high birthright of our nature—a blissful immortality—will be secured.

In proportion to its intrinsic and acknowledged importance, Christian parents generally are far more deficient in attention to the moral and religious culture of their children than in any other department of their education. In this respect, Christians of the present day were far excelled by the ancient people of God. Around the family hearth the pious Jew from night to night assembled his offspring, while he read from the book of the law, expounded the sacred institutions of the true religion, and taught them the worship of the true God. The Jewish child was trained up to know “the God of his father,” and to revere his religion.

If we search the records of pagan antiquity, or examine the history of modern idolatrous worshipers, they *too*, in their unflinching and rigid attention to the religious training of their children, may shame the Christian world. It is painfully humiliating to be constrained to believe that, with many Christian parents, while great concern is evinced that their children be well educated in the sense in which a vain, ungodly world understands the subject, that the intellect be stored with mere scientific knowledge, so little pains are taken to secure their moral and religious culture. If they would secure for their sons or daughters distinction and preëminence, in reference to this world, they spare neither time, nor money, nor effort; but, if *their* children are ever to become illustrious in the sphere of moral and religious influence, in many cases it must be independent of all parental exertion—the heart of the child is left a moral waste, while the parent, it would seem, expects his offspring to become religious by intuition.

The great practical question before us is: By what means may the proper religious training of the children of the Church be secured? Some may suppose that, as we have the Sunday-school among us, it will serve the purpose of religious training better than any thing else to which we can resort. If all the children of Christian parents were regularly in the Sunday-school, as those schools are generally conducted, their religious training would even then be far from being properly secured. The Sunday-school is a noble, a Heaven-blest institution; but still it cannot supersede an efficient, general system of religious training.

But what is the particular kind of training needed? and by what means may it best be secured? The Holy Bible is unquestionably the volume to which we must appeal. Within its sacred lids are contained

the lessons which are able to make us "wise unto salvation." This is the foundation on which we must build for all *real* happiness here, and for eternal felicity hereafter. It is Heaven's directory to man for the cure of moral evil. It contains the only authentic antidote against sin, and the only accredited pledge of God's love to the world. But how may we succeed in imbuing the minds and hearts of the rising generation with the important *facts*, the pure *precepts*, and the sublime *doctrines* of revelation?

We would recommend the following plan: Let the children in each family be formed into a Bible-class; give them appropriate books; assign to them suitable lessons, and let them be examined and instructed by the parent once or twice each week—let the time now wasted in idleness, or devoted to unprofitable conversation or vain amusement, be consecrated to the study of the sublime principles of our holy religion—let each "preacher in charge" see that the children of his pastorate are regularly classed, and diligently instructed, in Bible truth—let a senior Bible-class, for the edification of the members, be organized in each society—let the Sunday-school superintendents, teachers, and more advanced scholars, be included in this class—let them meet once a week, under the direction of the preacher, or some suitable person selected by him. By the adoption and diligent prosecution of this course, our churches will be filled with an intelligent membership, who will *read*, and *study*, and *think*, and *do*, as well as *feel*. Our Sunday-schools will always be abundantly furnished with well-qualified teachers. Thus, every minister may enter upon a field the most interesting and promising, and, at the same time, the most favorable to his own improvement; and become, according to the primitive custom of the Church, a *practical* teacher of religion, having his disciples and catechumen under his charge.

Thus every child may be taught, not only the geography of his State, but the geography of the kingdom of Immanuel—not only the grammar of his mother-tongue, but the grammar of the Holy Ghost—not only the philosophy of nature, but the philosophy of grace—not only the history of the United States and other countries, and the biography of Cesar, of Bonaparte, of La Fayette, and Washington; but also the history of the Jewish and Christian Churches, and the biography of Abraham and of Moses, of David and of Daniel, of Paul and of John, and of the blessed Saviour of the world.

Once more: Let the Bible be introduced as a text-book, and its sacred truths taught as a science in all our schools and colleges. Text-books are introduced, and classes formed, and diligently instructed and daily

examined on the sciences of history, mythology, chemistry, geology, astronomy, etc.; but why not on the science of theology? Where is the book comparable to the Bible? Where is the science so valuable as that whose principles it embodies? As a history, the Bible is worth all the other books in the world. It carries us back to the commencement of time, and records the birth of creation—it narrates the circumstances of the Fall, and unfolds the redemption of man—it describes the manners and customs of the most ancient and most remarkable people, and exhibits the wonderful interposition of God in their protection and deliverance. As a system of doctrines, it reveals the most sublime and important truths, and presents the clearest and most impressive illustrations. As a code of morals, it transcends all human effort. It teaches us what we are, whence we came, and what we should be—it unfolds both our duty and destiny—it pours upon our dreary pathway through life a heavenly illumination to direct our footsteps, and cheers our anxious hearts with the hopes of a blissful immortality.

And what good reason, we ask, can be offered in opposition to thus teaching the Bible in schools? Are the minds of the young to be carefully and diligently stored with all science but that which is divine, and all knowledge but that which comes from God? Must the fabulous legends of Homer, the obscene pages of Horace, the blood-stained commentaries of Cesar, be the every-day study of our youth? but the annals of Moses, the epic of Job, the pastorals of David, the sublime poems of Isaiah, the irresistible logic of Paul, the angelic ethics of John, and the divine philosophy of Jesus—are *these* to be interdicted? Must *they* be thrust aside, or only brought incidentally to view? Is it *right* to teach heathen philosophy and pagan mythology in our schools and colleges? but is it *wrong* to introduce Christian philosophy and Bible theology? Surely the Christian parent must feel that he is bound, by all the sacred obligations of religion, to train his children, not only for *this* world, but also for the *next*—not only with a knowledge of human science, but with a knowledge of God and of religion.

4. *It is the duty of parents to govern their children.*

This parental obligation is necessarily implied in the Scripture injunction: "Children, obey your parents." Thus it is not only founded, on divine precept, but is necessarily inferable from the relation subsisting between parents and children. The helplessness and dependency of the child render it incapable of governing itself; and both nature and revelation designate the parent as the appropriate person for the performance of this duty.

In considering the character of parental government, the following particulars may be noted as matters of importance:

First. It should *commence in early childhood.*

As soon as reason dawns, or the child is capable of understanding a command, it should be taught to obey. Commencing at this period, and with watchful solicitude persevering with a constant and undeviating course, the obligation and habit of obedience may be easily impressed and secured; and, unless the child be first taught the lesson of strict and unvarying obedience to its parents, there can be little hope of success in teaching it any thing else that is good.

Secondly. Parental government should be exercised with *uniformity.*

Fickleness and unsteadiness on the part of parents will soon destroy their control over their children. To be strict or careless, severe or lenient, by turns, as whim, caprice, or humor, may happen to dictate, is the course for the parent to adopt if he would teach the child to despise all parental authority and control.

Thirdly. This duty should be exercised with *discretion.*

The parent should not make too many rules, or require too much. He should give *advice*, or *counsel*, when it is proper, and issue his *command* only when it is necessary. Parental government should be *administered in love*, and with reference to the good of the child.

A mild, gentle, and steady course, mingling reason and instruction with authority and command, if adopted by the parent, will seldom fail to secure the blessing of filial love and obedience; whereas, if parents manifest, in the control of their children, a severe, tyrannical manner, or a turbulent temper, they will thereby "provoke them to wrath," instead of "bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

II. *The duties of children to their parents* will next be considered.

This is expressly enjoined in the fifth commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Ex. xx. 12. Our Saviour has repeated this commandment, and strongly enforced this duty (Matt. xv. 4). St. Paul has also commented upon it, styling it "the first commandment with promise" (Eph. vi. 2)—that is, with a promise *expressed*; for, doubtless, a promise is *implied* in connection with each commandment.

The term *honor*, as used in this precept, is to be understood in an enlarged sense, as embracing the *entire* duty of children to parents; indeed, it is generally construed, and properly so, we think, as covering the whole ground of the duties growing out of the relation subsisting between *inferiors* and *superiors*. And, in this extended application, it

not only includes the duties of children to parents, but of parents to children, of masters to servants, and of servants to masters; and of those high in station or office to the humble and obscure, and *vice versa*.

We now, however, speak specially of the duties of children to their parents. As *love* is "the fulfilling of the law," of course that term comprehends this entire duty; but it may be more specifically considered

1. It implies *gratitude*.

As no duty of children to their parents can be conceived more rational and imperative than that of gratitude, so no crime can be more detestable, or is more severely condemned in Scripture, than that of filial *ingratitude*. In reference to this sin, our Lord, quoting from the law (Ex. xxi. 15-17), says: "He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death." Matt. xv. 4. What can be more unnatural or revolting to all the better feelings of humanity than for children to forget, or not cherish with deepest emotions of gratitude and affection, the remembrance of that parental care and solicitude which watched over the helplessness and dependency of their infancy and childhood? Filial ingratitude can only find room in a heart bereft of all lovely and virtuous emotion.

2. Another duty of children to parents is *obedience*.

The Bible precept on this subject is most explicit. St. Paul says: "Children, *obey* your parents in the Lord; for this is right." Eph. vi. 1. And again: "Children, *obey your parents in all things*; for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." Col. iii. 20. From these scriptures we learn that this requirement of obedience is *universal*, with but *one exception*—it is to be "in the Lord"—that is, the obligation to *obey* becomes void when the requirement is contrary to the law of God. In such cases, the apostolic maxim, "We ought to *obey God* rather than *men*," should be observed; but this exception to the rule can only apply when children are of age and discretion to judge for themselves concerning the divine law. With this single exception, the obligation on children to obey their parents is universal and imperative; and this obedience should be rendered in a ready, docile, and cheerful spirit and manner.

Should parents, however, be so tyrannical and unreasonable as to require their children to engage in a matrimonial alliance with persons for whom they cannot have that esteem and love which the conjugal vow requires; or, should they so exercise authority over their children as to infringe upon that liberty of conscience on the subject of religion which is the scriptural birthright of children as well as parents—in such cases, as obedience to parents would involve disobedience to God, it ceases to be the duty of children.

The exceptions to the law requiring filial obedience are few, and of seldom occurrence. The child should never disobey the parent till, after mature consideration, and having counseled with judicious friends, the conviction is clear in his own mind that the parental command requires what is contrary to the command of God.

3. *Reverence for parents is another filial duty.*

This is clearly implied by the letter of the law itself: "Honor thy father and thy mother." As nothing can be more unnatural, so no sin is more ignominious, in the view of all virtuous minds, than that of irreverence or disrespect for parents. This reverence for parents, however, should be distinguished from a servile fear or dread. It should be mixed with confiding esteem and love.

Children should be slow to observe the faults and infirmities of their parents. By kind, respectful words, by gentle and submissive behavior—indeed, in their entire demeanor—they should evince that they look up to their parents as their superiors. When children forget to respect their parents, they *themselves* lose the respect of all the better class of society, and seldom fail to bring upon themselves degradation and ruin. How full of meaning is the exhortation of the apostle, "Honor thy father and mother; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth"! Significantly was it written by Solomon: "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Prov. xxx. 17.

4. *Protection, support, and comfort*, in seasons of affliction and amid the infirmities of age, are emphatically due from children to parents. This is clearly inferable from the general tenor of Scripture. It flows necessarily from the great law of love—it is embodied in our Saviour's precept of doing to others as we would that they should do to us. Indeed, such is the extent under which children are indebted to their parents, that, when they do all in their power to bless, comfort, and provide for them, in every hour of affliction and need, they never can fully repay what they owe. Hard and fiend-like must be the heart of that child who can witness the want of a father or mother, and fail to extend every possible relief. If both nature and Scripture dictate that parents, when they can, should "lay up for their children," the same considerations require that children, when their parents are needy or afflicted, should render them all the comfort and assistance in their power.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Whence may we learn the duties of parents and children?</p> <p>2. What is implied in the <i>first</i> parental duty specified, and by what scriptures is it established?</p> <p>3. The <i>second</i>, and how is it proved?</p> <p>4. What is the <i>third</i> duty of parents named, and how is it proved?</p> | <p>5. How may it best be performed?</p> <p>6. The <i>fourth</i>, and how should it be performed?</p> <p>7. How is the <i>first</i> duty of children to parents proved and illustrated?</p> <p>8. The <i>second</i>?</p> <p>9. The <i>third</i>?</p> <p>10. The <i>fourth</i>?</p> |
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CHAPTER XIII.

OUR DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBOR—APPLICATION OF THE LAW TO SPECIAL CASES AND CONDITIONS—RULERS AND SUBJECTS.

IN a political or civil sense, whether the governing power be styled *emperor, king, monarch, sovereign, president, governor, ruler, judge, or patriarch*, there are important *duties* pertaining to this political relation obligatory on both the *rulers* and the *persons ruled*. Although we have no evidence that the people of any country ever assembled *en masse* to form a civil compact, and so originate a government by formal stipulation between the *governors* and the *governed*, yet, in the nature of things, it is theoretically assumed that such a compact, by tacit implication, exists in all political establishments. Both the parties concerned possess distinct and separate *rights*, and out of these rights grow reciprocal *obligations*.

All civil governments are commonly embraced in four classes the *monarchical*, the *aristocratic*, the *republican* or *democratic*, and the *mixed*.

In a *monarchy*, the governing power is in the hands of a *single person*, usually styled *emperor, king, or autocrat*; in an *aristocracy*, this power is in the hands of the *nobility*, or *principal persons* of the State; in a *republic* or *democracy*, this power resides in the *people*, and is exercised either in their *collective capacity*, or through their *representatives*; a *mixed government* partakes to some extent of *more than one* of the preceding characteristics.

But, whatever may be the *form* of government, there are important duties growing out of this relation to which we call attention.

I. WE NOTICE THE DUTIES OF RULERS.

These grow out of certain important inherent *rights* which all men are supposed to possess, and which the government to which they submit is bound to protect and defend. The principal of these rights are those of "*personal security, personal liberty, and private property*." In the possession of these the government, or rulers, are bound to protect the citizens.

1. *It is the duty of the government to extend to all its subjects personal security.*

This implies the preservation of the person of each individual from the lawless, violent, or injurious attacks, of all persons whatsoever. It cannot be supposed that any government is capable of extending this protection, *absolutely* and *perfectly*, to all its subjects—this would require the governing powers to possess all the attributes of omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, none of which can pertain to any being but God; none but he *can* be everywhere present, beholding the evil and the good, and possess the wisdom and power sufficient to prevent every injurious or violent act which vicious persons may be disposed to perpetrate in reference to their fellows. All that civil rulers *can* do is, to enact wholesome laws for the protection of all the rights of the people, and to see that these laws are not only sanctioned by adequate penalties, but administered and executed with due fairness and impartiality, and with as little delay as possible. When *this* is done, each citizen possesses a reasonable assurance that the ruling power to whose authority he submits, not only respects and looks after his rights, but that, when they are infringed or violated, it provides an adequate remedy for the redress of the wrong; and thus he is furnished by his government with all that *personal security* which the nature of the case admits. More than this the government *could not* bestow, but this much it is *bound* to extend.

2. *Personal Liberty.*—Several important items are embraced in that *personal liberty* which it is the duty of all good governments to secure to its subjects.

(1) The freedom of *locomotion*, or the right of *transit* from one part of the country to another, is a privilege which should be denied to none, except as a punishment for crime. As God has bestowed upon all men this power of travel, and as it contributes greatly to the well-being and happiness of society, and as government is ordained and sanctioned, not as an engine of oppression, but as an instrument of good to the community, it follows that it is the duty of those who bear rule to secure to every subject the right of passing at will from one portion of the country to another, and to fix his residence wherever choice or interest may dictate, provided he interfere not with the rights of others.

(2) Another right which it is the duty of the government to secure to each citizen is, the *pursuit of happiness*, by engaging in any lawful calling, business, or profession, he may select. In a good government, exclusive privileges or monopolies should not be conferred on corporations, or individuals, to the general detriment of the commu-

nity. Restrictive regulations are only proper when it is clear that the general welfare will be promoted thereby.

(3) Government should secure to its subjects *liberty of conscience*. By this we mean the right of every man to the free and orderly expression of his opinions on all subjects, whether political or religious; provided he infringes no law, produces no riot or disturbance, and does not molest others in the enjoyment of their rights.

As religion is a concern between each individual and his Maker, nothing can be more incongruous and absurd than for one class of persons to prescribe a system of faith, or mode of worship, for the rest; nor can it be at all admissible for rulers to interpose between their subjects and God, so as to interfere with the rights of conscience.

Conscience, it is true, is often not well informed, and, in such cases, is not an infallible guide; yet it is also true that no man has a right to act contrary to the dictates of his conscience, nor can he do so without incurring guilt. The criminality of all wrong actions, which are performed in accordance with the dictates of conscience, results *solely* from the fact that the individual has sinfully neglected the means of enlightening his conscience.

Since, then, no one can act in violation of his conscience without incurring guilt, it results from the same principle of reasoning, that it would be tyrannical and wrong for any civil government not to protect its citizens in the full exercise of liberty of conscience. In the political systems of all Protestant countries these sacred rights are now well secured; and, in view of the rapid progress of liberal principles characterizing the present age, we may reasonably hope that the day is at hand when all men in all lands will be secured in the inestimable right of freedom of faith and speech, and allowed, without fear or intimidation, to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.

3. The right of *private property*.

This should be secured by government to every citizen. This right is not only in manifest accordance with nature, but is plainly recognized in Scripture. The divine law, forbidding *theft, robbery, fraud, and dishonesty*, in every shape, presupposes the right of property; for these sins are but specifications of the various methods of violating that right.

It is not to be supposed that any code of human laws, however judiciously framed or faithfully administered, can extend to every citizen complete protection in the right of his property. Such is the cunning craftiness of wicked, dishonest men, that, while fraudulently filching from the hand of honest industry the fruit of its labor, they will find many ways of evading the best of human laws, and of escaping the

penalty they justly deserve; but it is the duty of rulers to do all in their power to protect the owner of property in his possessions. In this way governors should be "for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." 1 Pet. ii. 14.

It is not only the prerogative, but the duty, of civil government, with solicitous care, to use all appropriate means to promote the peace, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people. This will include treaties of amity and commerce with foreign States, the regulation of trade, and the mutual exchange of commodities at home, the encouragement of the arts and sciences, of agriculture and manufactures, of industry and economy, of sobriety and good order, and especially of education, morality, and religion. A State which looks with indifference upon these interests must be greatly derelict in duty, and those functionaries intrusted with the management and control of her affairs will have a fearful account to render for the neglect of the welfare and happiness of the people over whom, in the providence of God, they have been placed as rulers.

II. THE DUTIES OF CITIZENS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

1. *Submission to the civil authorities, and obedience to the laws*, is a prime duty of every citizen.

On this subject St. Paul says: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake." Rom. xiii. 1-5.

The submission and implicit obedience to the authority of civil rulers here inculcated by the apostle, are rendered imperative by two considerations: *First*. Without this submission and obedience there can be no civil government, and civil government is essential to the general good of society. *Secondly*. Civil government is "of God"—that is, it exists by his sanction, and according to his providence. Hence, according to this general principle, he that resisteth the civil authority "resisteth the ordinance of God."

But, it may be asked, is *rebellion* against the civil government under

whose auspices, in the providence of God, our lot has been cast, never justifiable?

To this we reply—

(1) No personal *immorality*, *imbecility*, or *bad conduct*, on the part of rulers, while the constitution is maintained in good faith, can justify rebellion. The *personal* character of a ruler is one thing, and his *official* character is another thing. He may be immoral and profligate in his private life, and yet comparatively a good civil ruler; or he may be unimpeachable in his private character, and tyrannical and unsafe as a civil ruler. For his *private conduct* he is amenable to *God*; but, for his *official acts*, to the *constitution* and the *people* over whom he holds dominion.

(2) The cases in which rebellion against the authorities of civil government *may be justifiable*, are exceedingly rare; yet they sometimes do occur. Rebellion is a remedy so terrible in its character and consequences, that it should never be resorted to except in cases of extreme necessity, and after all milder means of redress have been tried in vain. Rebellion is never justifiable when the evils proposed to be remedied are less than those which rebellion would be likely to involve. In such cases, *great* evils had better be borne for a season, rather than incur *greater* evils by attempting their removal.

It may be safe to conclude—

First. When rulers are attempting to subvert the *constitution*, and to overthrow the liberties of the people by usurpation, it may be justifiable in the people to resist that usurpation—yea, it would be their *duty* to arise in their majesty and hurl the usurpers from their places of authority, and thus preserve intact the constitution, which is the great sheet-anchor of their sacred rights.

Secondly. When the government itself has become so corrupt, or the constitution so defective, that the endurance of the existing state of things would be a greater evil than the probable calamities of revolution—in such case, if there be a reasonable probability that revolution may be conducted to a successful issue, and a better government established, *then* it would not only be a *justifiable* act, but one demanded by the noble impulses of manhood and true patriotism, for the people to rise in rebellion against a corrupt government or tyrannical usurpation, and thus mutually pledge to each other “their lives, fortune, and sacred honor,” while issuing their solemn declaration of freedom and independence.

2. *Patriotism*, or love of our country, is a duty incumbent on every citizen. The same natural tie that binds to the love of family, kindred,

and home, originates the obligation and suggests the impulse of patriotism. How deep, yet how manly, was this feeling in the heart of the exiled Jew—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy"! Ps. cxxxvii. 5, 6. And how full of more than patriotic emotion must have been the heart of St. Paul, when he exclaimed: "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh"! Rom. ix. 2, 3.

The same patriotic emotion has been beautifully described by the poet:

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!"

The duty of patriotism is manifested by doing all in our power to sustain our institutions, and promote the prosperity of our country. This requires us—

(1) To contribute our *means*. The apostle says: "For this cause pay ye tribute also. . . . Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." Rom. xiii. 6, 7.

(2) This duty requires *respect* and *reverence* for our rulers. "Curse not the king, nc, not in thy thought" (Eccl. x. 20), is the admonition of Solomon. St. Paul quotes from Moses: "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." Acts xxiii. 5. The ruler of the people is styled "the minister of God;" hence he is worthy of due *reverence*, for his office' sake.

(3) It is the duty of every citizen to offer *prayer* for his rulers, and for the prosperity of his country. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Ps. cxxii. 6), is the exhortation of David. St. Paul teaches us to pray "for kings, and for all that are in authority." 1 Tim. ii. 2. The propriety and utility of this scriptural duty must be manifest to every serious, reflecting mind. It tends to preserve a continual memory of our indebtedness to God for the gracious providence which confers upon us all our social, political, and religious blessings, and to teach us our dependence upon him for their continuance.

Having considered, in its different phases, our duty to our neighbor, both in reference to its general principles and its application to specific conditions or relations in life, we inquire, in conclusion, *how this important duty may be performed.*

We reply, that mere unassisted nature is inadequate either fully to impart the knowledge of this duty, or to enable us to perform it when understood. As, without revelation, we may grope forever in the dark, unable to learn correctly what our duty to our neighbor implies, so, without the aid of divine grace and the influence of the Holy Spirit, our utmost efforts for the proper performance of that duty will be fruitless. As "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," so no man can do those things which the law of God requires, but through the aid of that Holy Spirit which God has promised to impart, in virtue of the atonement of Christ, to all them that believe.

When we consider that the divine "commandment is exceeding broad," not only requiring uprightness of conduct, but extending to the thoughts of the heart, and at the same time reflect on our utter helplessness and depravity, we may well exclaim: "Who is sufficient for these things?" But when we think of the fullness of the promise of divine grace, we may say, with the apostle, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIII.

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| QUESTION 1. Into what kinds may civil governments be divided? | 6. What, then, is the duty of governors? |
| 2. What are the principal duties of rulers? | 7. To what extent is the subject bound to obey the civil rulers? |
| 3. Is conscience an infallible guide to duty? | 8. Is rebellion ever justifiable? and if so, under what circumstances? |
| 4. Can we violate its dictates without guilt? | 9. Do the Scriptures sanction the virtue of patriotism? |
| 5. Can civil government extend absolute protection to every citizen as to his rights? | 10. By what means may we be able to perform our whole duty? |

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRISTIAN CONSECRATION.

THE great duty unfolded in this chapter, in strictness of speech, is comprised in our duty both to God and to our neighbor. We present it as a fundamental principle of Christian morals, that *every Christian, by uniting with the Church, enters upon a solemn promise and pledge to submit to its order and discipline, and to consecrate to the cause of God and to the interests of the kingdom of Christ his diligent and faithful service, devoting thereto, after "providing for his own household," his time, talents, labors, and substance.*

The principle involved in this proposition is one of the most fearfully neglected and overlooked, and at the same time one of the most vitally important, matters connected with the morals of Christianity. It is mainly owing to the neglect of this principle that the cause of Christianity has made comparatively so little progress in the world; and it is by the revival and restoration of this principle to its primitive, scriptural position and influence, that a new era shall one day dawn upon the Church, and the world shall be converted to God; hence it will appear of very great importance that we examine carefully the authority upon which the proposition rests and the sense in which it is to be understood and applied.

I. THE AUTHORITY for the principle of Christian consecration to the cause of God, as well as the sense in which the doctrine is to be understood and applied, rests on the example of the first Christian Churches, under the organization of the apostles, and numerous scriptures to the same effect.

1. In the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we learn that "all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."

In Acts iv. 32-35 we read as follows: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of

them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. . . . Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of houses or lands sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

We see here a picture of the spirit with which the first Christians at Jerusalem consecrated themselves and their substance to the cause of God. All this occurred under the eye, and with the approving coöperation, of the apostles. It is not, however, contended that the example here exhibited, so far as a *community of goods* is concerned, was intended as a precedent for the imitation of the Church in after time. The reverse is evident from the fact that this plan was not adopted in any of the other Churches, and it lasted but a short period at Jerusalem; but yet there are some parts of this history that do exhibit the conduct of these first Christians in the light of an example. They gave "to all men as every man had need." "Neither was there any among them that lacked." These expressions show that the object in disposing of their possessions was to supply the wants of the needy. To this they were impelled by the principles of that gospel they had received. Perhaps, under their circumstances, this object could in no other way be so well accomplished. If so, we see their obligation to do as they did.

But a change of circumstances, rendering a community of goods inexpedient, cannot release from the obligation to relieve the needy. The principle of deadness to the world and love for Christ and his followers still remains the same. Actuated by the same heavenly principle, we are bound to be willing, as circumstances may require, to make sacrifices equally great.

2. But we proceed to show that the principle of entire consecration to the cause of God, so illustriously exhibited by these first Christians, is abundantly taught in various parts of the Scriptures.

Hear some of the words of our Lord: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." Matt. vi. 19.

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Matt. vi. 24.

"I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Luke xvi. 9.

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Matt. xix. 24.

St. Paul says: "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7.

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Gal. vi. 10.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." 1 Tim. vi. 6, 7.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, . . . that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.

"God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." Heb. vi. 10.

"To do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Heb. xiii. 16.

"For they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." Rom. vi. 16.

"Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

St. John says: "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" 1 John iii. 17.

None can carefully consider these plain texts of Scripture and not see that it is the duty of the followers of Christ to consecrate themselves, with all they have and are, to the cause of God? They are not allowed to "lay up treasures on earth." This command is as positive as, "Thou shalt not steal;" and yet how little is it regarded! Mr. Wesley, on this text, says: "If you aim at laying up treasures on earth, you are not barely losing your time, and spending your strength for that which is not bread; for what is the fruit, if you succeed? You

have murdered your own soul. You have thrown away treasure in heaven. God and Christ are lost! You have gained riches and hell fire!"

Look also at that other text: "They that will be rich," etc. On this passage the same author remarks: "Those who calmly desire, and deliberately seek, to attain them (riches), whether they do in fact gain the world or no, do infallibly lose their own souls. These are they that sell him who bought them with his blood for a few pieces of gold or silver."

Are there not thousands in all the Churches around us who are not only "rich"—worth fourfold more than is requisite for "providing for their own households"—but are using their utmost efforts to gather riches in yet greater abundance, while the cause of God, of humanity, of religion, is left to languish? While many of them are rolling in wealth, luxuriating in fashionable pomp and splendor, the Lord's poor are suffering for bread, and the heathen perishing for lack of knowledge.

Again, look at the declaration of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." How many among us act as though they did not believe this scripture! They pursue the things of this world, lay up treasures on earth, and seek to enlarge their estate, with as much zeal and perseverance as those who are professedly of the world.

Our Lord's parable of the Talents clearly teaches that we are under obligations to render to God all the service in our power. Here we are taught that all we are and all we have belong to God. He hath intrusted us with *his* goods. We are required to use them, not for our own aggrandizement, but for the interests of his kingdom. If we fail to use them for his glory, we are culpable in his sight, and will be punished accordingly. The Christian is represented as "dead" to the world, and is exhorted to "set his affection on things above," and to "seek those things which are above." But how can he obey these precepts, while the love of the world, the thirst for riches, and the pursuit of gain are the great absorbing concerns of his life?

He should be diligent in business; but the great object and aim of all his pursuits should be, not the amassing of wealth, or the laying up of a fortune for his children, but the promotion of the glory of God, by doing good, and advancing the interests of his kingdom. After providing things needful for ourselves and household, whatever else of this world we accumulate or possess belongs to God and his cause. It is *not our own*, and we "rob God" if we appropriate it for the personal

emolument of ourselves or our children after us. If this be not the gospel-requirement, then we cannot comprehend the teachings of Christ and his apostles.

II. OBJECTIONS to this doctrine of entire consecration will no doubt be urged. It strikes at the root of the crying sin of the age—the vice of avarice. It will be opposed by the worldly-minded, the avaricious, the proud, the vain, the ambitious, the selfish, the ungodly; but it will meet the approval of the heavenly-minded, the benevolent, the humble, the meek, the cross-bearing, the compassionate, the pure in heart. If adopted by the Churches generally, it would produce a revolution in Christian practice such as has not been witnessed perhaps since the apostolic age. Men of the world, and living after the world, have flooded the Churches; but few comparatively are holy, and entirely consecrated to God.

Were the principle of entire consecration to God of time, talents, services, and substance, generally urged by the Churches, the lines would soon be more distinctly drawn between “the precious and the vile,” between such as follow Christ for “the loaves and fishes” and such as follow him because they are his friends, ready to do his bidding. No genuine Christian would falter in the ranks. The half-hearted, the real worldlings, the selfish, and the covetous, would soon cry out: “This is a hard saying, who can hear it?” Loving this present world, they would forsake the Saviour; but the genuine Christian, the kind, the benevolent, the good, would rally with renewed energy around the blessed cross—they would rise a mighty host in the name of Christ, and go forth with resistless power, and push the battle to the gate of the enemy. Before the influence of Christians thus devoted to God, living for God, laboring and suffering for God, walking “by faith and not by sight,” inflamed by holy zeal, warmed by heavenly love, trampling beneath their feet the pomp of the world, and esteeming “all things but loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus;” before the influence of such a Christian band the heart of stone would melt, the scoffer would be silenced, the sinner would tremble, infidelity would be struck dumb, and hell, in its gloomy center, would feel the shock. Such a religion the world once saw, when the holy apostles were the preachers, and thousands were bowing at the foot of the cross. Such a religion the world shall see again, when “Zion shall arise and shake herself from the dust,” when “the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom,” when the Rider upon the “white horse shall go forth conquering and to conquer.” In a word, such must be the zeal and devotion of the Church before the world shall be converted.

The great heathen world is now open for the gospel. All that is needed is the men and the means, and, with the promised blessing of God, the conversion of the world to Christianity shall soon be read on earth on the page of history, and heralded through heaven by the apocalyptic angel's trump.

When men and means are wanted for the purpose of war, the work of blood and slaughter, how soon are the magazines of earth opened to pour out their treasures and the plains covered with the marshaling hosts! Let but a similar zeal inspire the Church, and the friends of Christ be willing to rally round the cross of Calvary, and pour into the treasury of the Lord the wealth now corrupting in the coffers of the rich, who "profess and call themselves Christians," and we shall soon send armies and armaments to China and Japan, to Hindoostan and Oceanica; and "Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands to God," while "the isles shall wait for his law."

1. But it may be objected that *the carrying out of this entire consecration to God is impracticable.*

If so, then Christianity is a failure, and the most glowing prophecies of the Bible a delusion! *Why* impracticable? Did it not exist at the glorious birthday of the gospel Church? Has it not since been realized by various individuals in different ages? Were not such men as Luther, Baxter, Latimer, Wesley, Whitefield, Fletcher, Brainerd, Carvosso, Summerfield, and various others, who gave themselves, their time, talents, labors, and substance, to God, entirely consecrated to his holy cause? Let but the great body of professed Christians come up firmly and unitedly to the same standard, and the work is accomplished. If this entire consecration be *right*, it cannot be *impracticable*. What *ought* to be done, *may* be done. It *is* practicable. It *can* be realized. It *must* be realized, or the world will never be converted. But God has said: "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Let the principle of entire consecration to God be incorporated as an essential disciplinary requirement of the Church. Let it be explained, and urged upon all, as one of the great laws of the kingdom of Christ. Let it be plainly set forth, so that all in the Church, or proposing to enter it, may know at once that it is expected that all the faithful shall obey this precept with as much strictness as any other. Were this the case, what a marked difference there would be between the Church and the world!

2. But *this would provoke persecution.* Suppose it did. So would the keeping of many other commandments. "They that will live *godly* in

Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." If this principle be *right*, if it be a gospel axiom, which we are convinced none can deny without arraying themselves directly against the Scripture, it necessarily follows that no Christian, properly understanding the subject, can refuse obedience to this obligation without "denying the faith, and being worse than an infidel." It is better not to profess the name of Christ than, after having done so, obstinately to refuse to do what he commands.

III. ENCOURAGEMENT.—But there is a bright side to this subject. When this principle shall be carried out in any one Church, that Church will be a Goshen in the land of darkness. Its example will shine forth as a standing reproof to all others. It will be like one of the "two witnesses, prophesying in sackcloth." Its influence would soon be felt. The example would be exhibited of a band of Christians living together in pure Christian love and fellowship. Its widows would all be provided for, its poor all supported, its children all educated, all its interests amply sustained, and its missionaries sent abroad to bear to other portions of the world the glad tidings of salvation.

Were the Churches generally to carry out this principle of entire consecration, the influence would be like a sweeping revolution, not scattering death and destruction in its track, but sanctifying the Church, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, supplying the wants of the needy, visiting the sick, converting the world.

The wealth, learning, talent, influence, and power, now in possession of the professed followers of Christ, if properly wielded, would form a mighty river, defying in its majestic sweep all opposition, and bearing upon its bosom the blessings of peace, prosperity, happiness, and eternal life, to all the nations of the earth.

Religion is intended to unite man to his fellow-man, and all to God. This it is destined to accomplish. When once the glorious principles of the gospel, in all their purity and perfection, shall possess the hearts, and mold the lives, of all the people of the earth, "violence shall no more be heard in our land, nor wasting, nor destruction, within our borders." Then shall the voice from heaven proclaim to a converted world: "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIV.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. On what do the <i>authority</i> for the principle of Christian consecration to God and the <i>sense</i> in which it is to be understood rest?</p> <p>2. What proof is founded on the example of the first Christians?</p> <p>3. In what sense is the "community of goods" established by the Church at Jerusalem a model for the imitation of other Churches?</p> | <p>4. What are some of the principal of the other scriptures quoted on the subject?</p> <p>5. What objections to the carrying out of the principles of Christian consecration are mentioned?</p> <p>6. How may these objections be answered?</p> <p>7. How does it appear that there is a bright side to this subject?</p> |
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PART IV.—THE INSTITUTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.

BOOK I.—THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

ITS ORGANIZATION, GOVERNMENT, AND POLITY—INTRODUCTORY.

ALTHOUGH there has been much controversy, in different ages, on the subject of Church-government and polity, yet we are persuaded that, since the Lutheran Reformation, this department of theological science has not received a degree of attention commensurate with its importance. With many of the Protestant denominations, the leading *doctrines* of Christianity have been viewed of paramount importance, while Church-polity has been considered a matter of minor consequence. Voluminous controversial writings have been put forth on the mooted questions between Calvinists and Arminians, and between Socinians, Pelagians, Unitarians, or Universalists, on the one hand, and Trinitarians on the other hand; yet a comparatively small space has been allowed to the great questions pertaining to the organization and polity of the Church. It is true the leading points dividing Episcopalians and Presbyterians on this subject, and some other questions that might be named, have been extensively discussed; but these controversies have too generally been conducted in a deeply partisan spirit—each writer assuming that the organization with which he is connected is right in all things, and endeavoring so to construe the Scriptures as to sustain his pre-adopted theory.

It is also remarkable that, in much of the discussion upon this subject, too little appeal has been made to the teachings of Scripture. Many of the disputants have relied mainly, if not exclusively, in the defense of their views, on arguments founded alone on reason and expediency.

In the views maintained in this treatise, the principle by which we have been governed is, that the Bible, in regard to those great points in reference to which it furnishes clear information or explicit warrant, whether by express precept or apostolic example, is our infallible standard and authoritative guide; but that, in all matters of detail not set forth in Scripture, we should be guided by the principles of reason and expediency; provided only, that no regulation be adopted inconsistent with Scripture.

In the ensuing chapters, the following leading positions will be found, with more or less fullness, set forth and defended:

1. That the Christian Church is, in an important sense, a divine institution.

2. That the Scriptures do set forth, so far as some leading foundation principles are concerned, a form of Church-government; and that, thus far, all Churches should be conformed to the Scripture model.

3. That in much of the *detail* pertaining to Church-polity the Scriptures give no specific instructions; and that, in relation to all such matters, Churches are left to be guided by the principles of reason and expediency.

4. That our Saviour vested in his inspired apostles authority to organize and "set in order" his Church, and to exercise under him, so long as they lived, supreme jurisdiction and control over it.

5. That the apostolic office, so far as it implied divine inspiration and miraculous powers, ceased with the original apostles; but, so far as it implied a divine commission to preach the gospel to all the world, and to administer the sacraments and discipline of the Church, it is to be perpetuated "always, even unto the end of the world."

6. That the inspired apostles deposited that portion of their prerogative which was to be perpetuated in the ordained eldership (bishops, or presbyters), who are their proper scriptural successors.

7. That these bishops, presbyters, or pastors (or by whatever name they may be distinguished), to whom is committed the oversight and government of the Church, should, as expediency may require, exercise that oversight and government in part through the medium of councils, presbyteries, synods, conferences, or conventions. They should also, so far as expediency may dictate, arrange for the assistance and coöperation of the laity, yet so as still to retain within their own hands the power of government with which the Head of the Church has invested them.

8. Each organized Church should be placed under the pastoral charge of an ordained bishop, elder, or minister.

9. Ministers not in charge of organized Churches should be employed as evangelists, or missionaries, in getting up and organizing new Churches.

10. The elders, to whom pertain the government of the Churches, should arrange for the episcopal or the presbyterial plan—for the itinerant or the more settled pastoral relation—according as they may judge the one or the other to be expedient, in view of securing the great object of the ministry—the supply of the Churches with pastors, and the establishment of the gospel in new places.

11. There are two orders of ministers: First, elders (otherwise termed bishops, or pastors), in whom is vested the prerogative of government and ordination; secondly, deacons, an order of ministers inferior to elders, not vested with the prerogative of government or ordination, but who are assistants of the elders, and who, after using "the office of a deacon well," may be entitled by promotion to the full prerogatives of the ministry.

12. The rulers of the Church, in administering its government, are bound to observe the laws laid down in Scripture; nor have they a right to adopt any regulation inconsistent therewith.

CHAPTER I.

FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES EXAMINED.

ALL societies, institutions, and organizations, must be either *human* or *divine* in their origin. When *human*, those who establish them, or unite in their organization, possess the prerogative of arranging their constitution according to their pleasure.

In a political point of view, although some forms of government may combine more advantages than others, and be far preferable to them, yet no nation or people can be required to adopt any particular form of government when they deem another form better, but all are properly left in this matter to judge for themselves. They may make an unwise choice—they may choose an aristocracy, when a monarchy would be more suitable to their condition; or a monarchy, when a republic or a mixed government would be much more beneficial—but in this they are not to be arbitrarily controlled by a foreign influence. If they choose to make a bad selection, they will, of course, suffer the evil consequences, but they may not rightfully be molested in the exercise of their own choice. This right of choice cannot be trampled upon, except by the foot of tyranny.

All communities, or conventions of persons, possessing the right to establish a constitution for their own government, have not only the right to choose their own form of government, but they may incorporate in it any principles, ceremonies, or penalties, they please, so that they do not infringe upon the rights and prerogatives of others; and in the exercise of this right they are accountable to God alone.

The same principle applies to all voluntary benevolent associations. These being merely *human* institutions, those who unite in their organization are their own judges, both as to the expediency of originating them, and as to the peculiar character of their constitution. This principle is of universal application to *human* institutions.

By a *divine* institution, we understand one which has been founded by the Almighty himself. Here we readily perceive that, in the very nature of things, there is something radically different from all insti-

tions *merely human*. A *divine* institution, whether political or ecclesiastical, or whatever be its character, originates in the will and appointment of God. It is the appointment of God that causes it to *be*, and to be *what it is*. God, being the creator and supreme governor of the universe, possesses the right to prescribe for all or any portion of his creatures whatever form or constitution of government he may please, whether political or ecclesiastical; and whatever God has appointed, or prescribed, is of universal and absolute obligation, to the last jot and tittle, according to the true intent and meaning of the divine appointment. It follows, moreover, that whatever God has appointed or established must remain in force, unchanged and unmodified, until the same authority which gave it being and force shall disannul or modify it. No power of man may alter or modify an ordinance of God.

Again, as God possesses the right to establish among his creatures whatever institutions he may please, so also it is his prerogative to select the method or plan according to which such institutions shall be set up. He may choose to exercise his agency through the medium of angels or of men, or whatever being or agency else he may select, as a suitable instrumentality for the accomplishment of his own purposes; but those agents, whether angelic or human, can only proceed so far as they are clothed with the authority of God, and act in accordance with the divine commission with which they are invested. Should they transcend or deviate from their commission, all their acts in thus transcending or deviating, so far as the establishment of a divine institution is concerned, are null and void; but this would not vitiate, or tend in the least to weaken, the force of such acts as may be performed in accordance with their commission.

Having now premised some of the radical and general principles pertaining to human and divine institutions, we proceed to consider their connection with and bearing upon the Christian Church.

The *Christian Church* must be either a *divine* or *human* institution. A divine institution, according to the principles laid down, derives its authority from the appointment of *God*—a human institution from the appointment of *man*. It should not, however, be overlooked, that an institution may be *divine* in some respects, and *human* in other respects; but the distinction is obvious. So far as it originates in the appointment of God, or has been prescribed by his authority, it is *divine*; but so far as any thing pertaining to it has been left to the judgment and discretion of uninspired man, it is *human*.

It may be said, with propriety, that the *State* and *family* are, to a certain extent, divine institutions; for the one originates in the ex-

press appointment of God, and the other is *of God*; for it is written: "There is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God." Rom. xiii. 1. Therefore it is true, whether we speak of the institution of the Church, the State, or the family, the same principle applies in precisely the same way. Just so far only as they originate in the appointment or by the authority of God, to the same extent are they divine institutions.

That the Christian Church is a *divine* institution, in a high and important sense of the word, is admitted by all Christians. Every thing essential to its constitution is founded upon the appointment of God. We are not, however, to infer from this, that every thing should be excerpted from the Church which God has not expressly appointed. To say that God has prescribed *nothing* in reference to the institution and organization of the Church, is to deny that it is a divine institution at all; but to contend that nothing may be connected with its organization except what God has expressly appointed, is a position unwarranted by the word of God—nor is it maintained by any denomination of Christians.

From the above, it will follow that, in the establishment and organization of the Christian Church, some things are expressly laid down or prescribed in Scripture, but that all things which may properly be connected with that organization are not thus expressly prescribed. It also follows that, so far as the constitution and organization of the Church have been expressly laid down or prescribed in Scripture, it is the duty of Christians to conform thereto; but in reference to the less important matters, not prescribed in the Scriptures, they may be guided by the dictation of circumstances, or their judgment of expediency.

In opening the Bible to learn the true character of that organization called the *Christian Church*, our first inquiry will be: Through what *agency*, or by what *means*, has God established and organized this Church? Here we may observe that, since the Fall of man, God has only been approachable by the human family through a mediator; but the great Mediator was not fully revealed to man under the Mosaic dispensation. Although all the merciful manifestations of God to man since the Fall were virtually and really through the mediation of the Messiah, yet, until this Messiah was manifest in the flesh, there was instituted a *sub-mediation*. God, ever since the Fall, could only look mercifully upon man through the Messiah, but until the actual coming of the Messiah man could only look up to that Messiah, and thus have access to the mercy of God through signs and symbols, types and shadows, which properly constituted a sub-mediatorship, through which

man could apprehend that only true and real Mediator between God and man.

All the typical array of the Mosaic law was adumbrative of the gospel. Moses, with his priests and altars, his victims and his offerings, foreshadowed Christ and his gospel, his atonement and his Church; but the Mosaic institution, notwithstanding its typical and shadowy character, was nevertheless an appointment of God—it was divine in its origin, and, for the time and purposes for which it was intended was as much an institution of God, and of as binding obligation, as the gospel itself now is. But we ask, How did God give his sanction to that institution, and stamp it with the seal of his authority? We answer, It was through the ministry of Moses. To him he gave his law, inscribing its great moral heart upon the tables of stone with his own finger, and presenting in minute detail all the precepts and commandments, the ceremonies and rites. Thus, having qualified and instructed him in all matters, great and small, pertaining to the politico-ecclesiastical organization about to be set up, in all the minutia in reference to the government and worship of the people, the tabernacle to be reared, and the offerings to be presented, he sends him down from the mount of revelation, yet quaking with the touch of Divinity, commissioned with the solemn charge: "See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."

Thus we perceive that, in the establishment of the divine institution of the Mosaic law, the chosen mediator of the Sinaic covenant was not only endued with miracle-working powers for the attestation of the divinity of his mission, but was charged with minute and specific instructions in reference to all the parts and appurtenances of the extensive and complicated fabric for the erection of which he was the divinely-constituted agent. The point specially to be borne in mind in the Mosaic institution is, that Moses was not commanded to erect among the Israelites a civil and religious polity of some indefinite character, but that minute and specific instructions were given, pointing out in detail the principles to be incorporated, the ordinances and services to be observed, and the various classes and kinds of sacred persons and things, together with the special offices they were to perform, and the uses to which they were to be appropriated—from all which it is clear that the institution of the law was only divine so far as it was conformed to the true intent of the divine prescription. Had Moses proceeded to the erection of a tabernacle of service, and a political and Church-organization, framed according to his own conceptions of propriety, utility, or expediency, independent of his instructions. in the

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What is the distinction between a <i>human</i> and a <i>divine</i> institution?</p> <p>2. Have a people the right to choose their own form of government?</p> <p>3. In a divine institution, to what extent may the people shape their government as they choose?</p> <p>4. How may an institution be <i>divine</i> in some respects, and <i>human</i> in other respects?</p> | <p>5. In what sense are the <i>State</i> and the <i>family</i> divine institutions?</p> <p>6. In what sense is the <i>Church</i> a divine institution?</p> <p>7. How has God been approachable by man since the Fall?</p> <p>8. Was the <i>Mosaic law</i> a divine institution, and in what manner was it set up?</p> <p>9. Who was the Agent, and with what authority was he vested, in setting up the <i>Christian Church</i>?</p> |
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CHAPTER II.

THE APOSTOLIC OFFICE.

I. WE CONSIDER ITS NATURE.

We see from the Scriptures that Christ, in the establishment and organization of his Church, called to his assistance the services of others, whom he called *apostles*; and we proceed to inquire into the nature of the *apostolic office*.

When was the apostolic office instituted? Some have supposed that when our Saviour appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, and delivered to them the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," then, and in that act, *originated* the apostolic office, in the exercise of which the apostles proceeded in the establishment of the Christian Church. But this view of the subject we conceive to be erroneous. To suppose that the calling and commission of the apostles, which took place near the commencement of Christ's public ministry, was only temporary, and ceased when Christ expired on the cross, and that the apostolic office commenced *de novo*, subsequently to the Saviour's resurrection, though a very generally received sentiment, yet, we think, a little examination will clearly evince that it must have been adopted in haste.

In the first chapter of The Acts, we are presented with an account of the appointment of one to fill the place vacated by the apostasy and death of Judas. Peter on that occasion, speaking of Judas, said, "He was numbered with us, and had obtained part of *this ministry*;" plainly implying that the ministry pertaining to the apostles, subsequent to the crucifixion of Christ, was not a newly constituted one, but a continuation of the same ministry into which they, together with Judas, had originally been inducted. In confirmation of the same doctrine, Peter proceeds to quote from the Psalms the following words: "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein, and *his bishopric let another take*." After this we find the apostles praying in the following words: "Thou Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may *take*

part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell."

Now, to suppose that the apostolic ministry, in its history subsequent to the resurrection, was not a continuation of the same that had existed previous to the crucifixion, but that it is founded upon and originated with the grand commission given after our Saviour's resurrection, seems obviously contrary to the plain import of the passages just adduced. We arrive, therefore, at the conclusion, that the apostolic office, in the exercise of which the apostles acted, when organizing the Christian Church, dates its origin anterior to the Saviour's crucifixion. In the tenth chapter of St. Matthew we find Jesus calling his twelve apostles, and "sending them forth," saying to them: "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." And in the same discourse the Saviour adds: "He that receiveth you receiveth *me*, and he that receiveth *me* receiveth *him that sent me*."

Here we find the foundation of the apostolic commission, and in reference to it we may notice that two things are clearly apparent: 1. It implied a commission to "preach," and to confirm the same by the performance of miracles. 2. It implied a commission to act in the name and under the instructions of Jesus, with the same divine authority which *he* had received from the Father. This is evident from the remarkable declaration, "He that receiveth you receiveth *me*, and he that receiveth *me* receiveth *him that sent me*." As much as if the Saviour had said, "I delegate to you the same authority which my Father hath delegated to me."

We find the establishment of the apostolic office recorded by St. Mark, in the third chapter of his Gospel, in the following words: "And he *ordained* twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." Here we perceive substantially the same account which is given by St. Matthew, with the more explicit announcement of the *ordination* of the apostles.

On the subject now before us we may farther remark that, although we must date the original institution of the apostolic office from the first appointment and ordination of the apostles, and their commission to preach and work miracles, yet it must be confessed that while the commission they received was plenary, clothing them with divine authority to enter upon the great work for which they had been consecrated, it was circumscribed as to the field of its operation. Jesus said unto them. "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of

the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." From this we infer that although the apostles were now fully invested with the authority and prerogatives of the apostolic office, yet this does not imply that the field of their labors might not subsequently be enlarged, and they be more fully and explicitly instructed as to the nature of their duties.

In the establishment of his kingdom our Saviour advanced step by step, unfolding to his apostles the great mysteries of his gospel and the ground-plot of the new institution, as they were able to understand and prepared to receive them. Hence it appears that even up to the hour of our Saviour's crucifixion his apostles were greatly ignorant with regard to the laws and institutions of that kingdom, for the establishment of which they had been chosen and ordained as prime ministers.

Subsequent to our Saviour's resurrection farther light was shed upon this subject. We read (Matt. xxviii. 18-20): "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." It is recorded (Mark xvi. 15): "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," etc. In John xx. 21-23, we read: "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

From the scriptures above quoted, it appears that after our Saviour's resurrection from the dead he enlarged the boundaries, and more fully explained the character of the apostolic mission. Hitherto the apostles had been restricted in their labors to the Jews, but now the "middle wall of partition," which had separated the Gentile from the Jew, is demolished, and "all the world" is the divinely-assigned field of apostolic evangelism and jurisdiction. The plenary powers of the apostles are here distinctly and emphatically stated. The words of the Saviour are: "As my Father hath sent me, *even so send I you.*" The Father had sent the Son, clothed with "all power in heaven and in earth," "even so" doth the Son "send" the apostles. So that as the Son was invested with all the authority of the Father, in like manner were the apostles invested with all the authority of the Son; hence it is clear

that all the acts and doings of the apostles, under the commission in question, are of divine authority.

It is not, however, to be inferred from this that the apostles were invested with the authority of Christ to perform any part of the peculiar mission *he* received of the Father; but that *they* were as *truly sent as truly authorized* to perform the work assigned them, in establishing and organizing the gospel-Church, as the Son had been sent and authorized by the Father to perform the work for which *he* came into the world.

II. Another important and obvious inference from the apostolic commission, as here enlarged and explained, is its *perpetuity*. This the general tenor of the gospel would strongly indicate. It is plain that the Christian religion is designed for universal dissemination. It is intended for all people in all ages; hence it would appear that it should be sent to all as an authoritative message from God. But the express language of the commission, in its enlarged and more explicit form, as already quoted, sets the point in hand in a light not easy to be misunderstood: "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*." And again: "Go ye therefore, and teach *all nations*." Now, we ask, if the apostolic office terminated with the lives of the then existing apostles, how was it possible for them to fill the mission with which they were intrusted? Could the twelve, in their own persons, "go into *all the world*"? Could *they* "preach the gospel to *every creature*"? Could *they* "teach *all nations*," of every age, and of every clime? It is most evident that they could not. But again, the Saviour adds: "Lo, I am with you *always, even unto the end of the world*." Now, we demand, can this apply exclusively to the ordained twelve? Are *they* to be continued as the personal agents in carrying out this commission "to the end of the world"? No one can so understand the passage. And we may confidently ask, How, therefore, can the passage be consistently interpreted, unless we infer that the apostolic office is to be perpetuated, and this commission to be carried out by the apostles' successors?

Notwithstanding the plain, and to our mind unavoidable, inference from the words of Christ, that the apostolic office is perpetual, yet many are slow to admit the truth of the inference. We are met by the objection, that the apostles were endued with plenary inspiration to write the New Testament Scriptures, and with miracle-working power. And it is argued that as it is not contended that the supposed successors of the apostles have been endued with these powers, therefore the apostles can have no successors. We will calmly consider this objection, as it is the main, if not the sole, reliance of those who restrict the apostolic

office to the New Testament twelve. Our first remark is, that the objection in question is based upon and derives all its force from what we conceive to be a false assumption. It assumes that the apostolic office, in order to be *perpetual*, must be *unchangeable*—that is, that a material change in the power and prerogatives of an office cannot take place without the *destruction* of that office. But why, we ask, must such a result ensue? Does *perpetuity* in itself necessarily imply *unchangeableness*? Surely it does not. The existence of man is to be perpetuated forever, but who can tell “through what new scenes and changes we must pass”? Even so, may not the apostolic office still be perpetuated, in all that is essential to its existence, while it may undergo changes in its features?

But we are not left to mere reasoning on this subject. We have the plain Bible-statement of facts. As we have already seen, the mission of the apostles, after the resurrection of Christ, was greatly changed from what it had been before. It was enlarged in its sphere, modified in its character, and more explicitly unfolded in its functions, yet all that was essential to its identity was preserved. It was still the same *ministry* and *apostleship*. If, then, so great a change as was realized in the functions and prerogatives of the apostles, in passing from the period of their original call and ordination up to the full exercise of their high prerogatives, in the establishment and organization of the gospel-Church, subsequent to the resurrection of Christ, did not destroy the identity of the office, why should it be argued that the same office cannot be perpetuated, unless precisely the same prerogatives and powers be continued with it?

We do not contend that *that* part, or, more properly, that *appendage* of the apostolate, which implied plenary inspiration and miraculous endowments, was to be transmitted to their successors. This is not the matter in dispute. The only question here before us, is whether those extraordinary powers were a necessary part of the office essential to its very existence? We see no evidence that they were. Miraculous powers were no doubt possessed by numbers having no claims to be apostles. And moreover, it is clear that, so far as plenary inspiration is concerned, this was not possessed by the apostles till they were “endued with power from on high” on the day of Pentecost. It was not till then that the Spirit “led them into all truth,” bringing to their minds the past instructions of Christ, and enabling them to pen those divine truths which constitute the New Testament code. And yet it is equally clear that they did not *just begin* to be apostles when they received these extraordinary endowments. They had been consecrated

to the same "ministry and apostleship," even while Judas was one of their number. Previous to the crucifixion of Christ, it was not thought necessary by our Lord to confer upon the apostles powers so extensive. And the reason is obvious. Such powers were not then requisite. Upon the same principle, we may infer that, when those extraordinary powers ceased to be needed, they would of course be withheld. But as the conferring of them did not create the apostolate, neither can the withholding of them destroy it.

It will be readily perceived how utterly inconsistent with the foregoing scriptural view of the *perpetuity* of the apostolic office must be that theory upon which have been founded the arrogant assumptions of a haughty episcopacy as well as all the enormous and blasphemous pretensions of the papacy. According to the Scriptures, the apostolic office is *perpetuated*; but in what? Not in the assumed Primacy, in the pretended chair of St. Peter, claiming to sway a scepter of absolute control, as "the Lord God the Pope," over the whole Church—not in the arrogant claims and usurped prerogatives of an unwarranted episcopacy—but in the living ministry, "called of God," and "sent forth" by the Head of the Church "into all the world" to "preach the gospel to every creature." In the Scripture sense, *they* are the successors of the apostles, who, like St. Peter, hear the voice of their Master by his Spirit addressing them, saying, "Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep;" or who can say with St. Paul, "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel." The divinely called and commissioned ministers of Christ, in every age, are the *apostles* of the Lord, not claiming the miraculous powers and extraordinary prerogatives of the sacred "twelve," but succeeding them as "ambassadors for Christ," proclaiming his gospel, administering his ordinances and discipline and feeding the "Church of God."

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II.

- QUESTION 1. Whom did Christ call to his assistance in establishing his Church?
2. What erroneous view has been extensively held as to the origin of the apostolic office?
3. How can it be shown that the apostolic office originated in the first *calling and ordination* of the twelve?
4. What scriptures are quoted to prove that Judas was an apostle?
5. What two elements did the apostolic office originally embrace?
6. Wherein does the record of Mark, on the subject, vary from that of Matthew?
7. Was the original commission of the apostles plenary?
8. Wherein was it afterward changed?
9. What farther light was shed upon the subject after Christ's resurrection?
10. In what sense were the apostles *sent as* the Father had sent the Son?
11. Was the apostolic office to be *perpetual*?
12. How is this proved?
13. What objection is urged against this doctrine?
14. How is the objection answered?
15. Is the view given of the *perpetuity* of the apostolic office consistent with the assumptions of High Church Episcopalians and Roman Catholics?

CHAPTER III.

FORM OF CHURCH-GOVERNMENT.

I. BEFORE we proceed to inquire particularly concerning the constitution of the Church, as established under the apostolic administration, we will consider *the light in which the acts and doings of the apostles in the premises should be viewed by the Church in all succeeding ages, and the extent to which they should be considered of binding authority.*

From the supreme authority with which the apostles were invested, and the divine inspiration with which they were endued, it does not necessarily follow that they acted under the sanction of this authority, and under the guidance of this inspiration, in all the minute history of their lives. In Galatians ii. 11-13, St. Paul speaks as follows: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him." Here we find Peter, one of the inspired and divinely-commissioned apostles, acting with dissimulation, and receiving the righteous reprimand of St. Paul. No one can suppose that Peter, in this case, was acting under the authority of that divine commission he had received of the Lord Jesus, or that he had a right to claim, while acting in contravention of the spirit of the mission, the fulfillment of the promise—"Lo, I am with you alway."

In 1 Cor. vii. 6, St. Paul says: "But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment." On this verse Dr. Clarke remarks: "We may understand the apostle here as saying that the directions already given were from his *own judgment*, and not from any divine inspiration; and we may take it for granted that when he does not make this observation he is writing under the immediate afflatus of the Holy Spirit." Seeing, then, from these scriptures, that the apostles themselves were liable, in some cases, to err, and did not profess to speak at all times under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it is matter of special importance to us to be able certainly to distinguish their *errors* from their *authoritative acts*, and their *personal advice* from their *divinely-inspired*

instructions. To admit that there are no means by which we may gain a knowledge of this distinction, would be to shroud the New Testament in obscurity, and greatly weaken its authority; but we are not left, in this matter, to be tossed upon the waves of uncertainty.

We inquire therefore, How may we arrive at the knowledge in question? As the apostles were specially commissioned to establish and organize the Christian Church, and endued with miraculous powers and plenary inspiration, for the accomplishment of this great work, we view it as a matter of clear and necessary inference that in all their official acts and instructions they were so guided by the Spirit of unerring truth that all they did and said, belonging or in anywise appertaining to the great work for which they had been set apart, was of divine authority and perpetual obligation. And as the Scriptures of the New Testament are presented under the divine sanction as the infallible record of the gospel system, containing the history of its Divine Author, of his death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification, together with the setting up, under apostolic administration, of the Church, and all doctrines and regulations necessary for its permanence and prosperity, we infer that whatsoever may be recorded *erroneous* in the conduct, or of *mere human advice* in the teachings, of the apostles, are only the *exceptions* to the general rule; and as such, the New Testament itself, by the manner in which such facts are recorded or such instructions are delivered, will clearly show *that they are exceptions*. We therefore conclude that the example, the institutions, the regulations, and the instructions of the apostles, are of divine authority, and of permanent obligation, *except when the Scriptures themselves plainly indicate to the contrary*.

II. We now inquire concerning the FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND POLITY according to which the New Testament Church has been organized.

In entering upon this subject, the first question to be considered is this: Has any particular form of Church-government been laid down in the New Testament?

In modern times, a numerous portion of the followers of Christ have adopted the negative side of the question now before us. Assuming that Christ and his apostles laid down for the Church which they reared "no particular form of government," many have proceeded to erect and organize ecclesiastical fabrics, according to their own conceptions of propriety or expediency, until Christendom has become severed into an almost endless number of dissimilar institutions, resembling each other as little as the diversified systems of political rule throughout the known world. The causes which have tended to give currency

to this sentiment, and its pernicious influence upon Christianity itself, we will not now consider. It is our present business to examine its claims to truth. Is it *true* that Christ and his apostles have established no particular form of Church-government?

The position that no particular form of government has been established for the New Testament Church, upon the admission that such a Church has been established, seems to us to imply an absurdity. How can we conceive of a Church without a government? or of a government without a form? The very idea seems too ethereal for comprehension. As well might we speak of a house without a *form*, or of a world without a *form*, as of a government without a *form*. *Form* is something which necessarily inheres in all created substances, whether material or immaterial, whether simple or complex. It is essential to their very existence. Who can conceive of a political government without a form? It may be irregular in its arrangements, incongruous in its parts, or rough-hewn in its aspects, but if it be a government it *must have a form*. It may come under none of the heads, according to the definitions commonly given, of the different forms of government; but, without a form of some kind, it would not be a government at all.

Some who aver that "no particular form of Church-government is laid down in the New Testament," say they do not mean that there is "no *form* of Church-government therein laid down," but "no *particular form*," etc. If this be the position, then we demand: What is meant by "a *particular form*"? Is not one form as much "a *particular form*" as another? If not, what form is that which comes under the definition of *particular*?

Perhaps the meaning of some who use the phrase is, that "no *one* form of government is established *more than*, or *in preference to*, another." If the shift be made to this position, then we reply that one or the other of two things must be true. If "no *one* form of government be established *more than*, or *in preference to*, another," then it will follow either that *no form at all is established* or that *various forms are established*. For if one form is established, and others are not, it is clear that one is *more established* than others. But if the position be taken in real sincerity, that Christ and his apostles established various forms of government for the gospel Church, then we demand: What were those *various forms* of government? In what did their essential difference consist? If there was an essential difference between them, was not one preferable to the others? If one was preferable to the others, why was not that one universally established? Was there an essential difference in human nature, or in the nature of true Christi-

anity, in different places, that rendered these various systems of Church-government necessary? Did the same apostle establish different systems of Church-government? or did Paul establish one system, Peter another, and James another? Was one an Episcopalian, another a Presbyterian, and another a Congregationalist?

But, seeing the absurdity of all these positions, we are inclined to believe that the real meaning of those who contend that "Christ and his apostles established no particular form of Church-government," is that *they established no Church-government whatever*. Assuming, then, that this is the true meaning of the position against which we are now contending, we may dismiss from the controversy the words "*particular*" and "*form*" as mere expletives, and then the question will be narrowed down to one single point: *Did Christ and his apostles establish any Church-government?*

To comprehend this subject thoroughly, it will be necessary for us to inquire: What is the *Christian Church*? The word Church is, in the Greek, *ἐκκλησία*, which means a *congregation assembled for purposes of business*, whatever be the character of the business. A Church may properly be said to be *established* whenever a society or congregation is organized—that is, when arrangement is made for the regular meeting of the congregation and the transaction of business therein, according to established order or rule. But, in a religious sense, by a *Church* is generally understood "a congregation of faithful men, in which the true word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinances, in those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

From the foregoing, it appears that, according to the generally received sentiment, a Church is a regularly-organized religious association, or society. Now, to our mind, it is difficult to conceive of such a society without a government. If the society be organized, it must be organized according to some constitution or rule; and that constitution or rule would form the basis of government. To suppose that Christ and his apostles established the Christian Church, and yet that they prescribed *no rule, no order, no fixed principle*, for the transaction of business, *no government* for the regulation of the ecclesiastical body which they created, is a position which, judging *a priori*, we must consider exceedingly improbable. In view of the nature and fitness of things, and judging from the general analogy of the works and administration of God, *prima facie* evidence is manifestly against it; and we should be slow to subscribe to the sentiment in the absence of clear and decided proof of its correctness.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. To what extent were the apostles under the influence of divine inspiration?</p> <p>2. What proof is given in support of this position?</p> <p>3. By what rule may we decide when they <i>were</i> and when they <i>were not</i> inspired?</p> <p>4. What is the first question proposed as to the <i>form</i> of Church-government?</p> <p>5. How is the question answered?</p> <p>6. What evil results have followed from an erroneous position on this question?</p> | <p>7. How is the position that the Scriptures establish "no particular form of Church-government" shown to be absurd?</p> <p>8. How have the abettors of this erroneous view shifted their ground, and how is it shown that in all its phases their position is alike untenable?</p> <p>9. How is the Christian Church defined?</p> <p>10. Is the position that "no form of Church-government has been established" reconcilable with the <i>definition</i> given of the Church?</p> |
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CHAPTER IV.

FORM OF CHURCH-GOVERNMENT—SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY—THE OLD TESTAMENT.

DID Christ and his apostles establish any particular form of Church-government? We proceed to examine the Scripture testimony in reference to this question.

1. Our first argument from Scripture is founded upon the *general analogy between the law and the gospel*.

The law and the gospel are the two great and important divine institutions constituting the leading subject-matter of revelation. The one is the prominent theme of the Old Testament and the other the engrossing topic of the New. The law was properly introductory to and typical of the gospel; and so intimate and important was the connection between them, that the law derived all its excellence, its life, vigor, and efficacy, from that gospel which it foreshadowed, and by the introduction of which it was to be superseded, while the gospel is a comment upon the mysteries of the law—the substance of which the law was the shadow, and the “bringing in of a better covenant,” as an abiding substitute for that which was “ready to vanish away.”

In connection with these evidences of the intimate relation subsisting between the law and the gospel, and the constant reference had by the former to the latter, when we remember the emphatic and minute sense in which the numerous parts of the complicated Mosaic system were prescribed and enjoined by the direct authority of God, it will appear unreasonable to suppose that the government of the Christian Church should be left in a state of vagueness and uncertainty. In the law of Moses, the introductory and inferior dispensation, the utmost pains are taken that all things may be explicit; but are we to suppose that in the gospel of Christ, the superior dispensation, “shadows, clouds, and darkness,” are to rest upon the institution? In an institution of types and symbols, we find clear and specific arrangements; but in an institution of substance and reality, are we to look for obscurity and uncertainty? In a *transient* system, we find the organization and gov-

ernment, in their numerous features and minute details, specifically prescribed and rigidly enjoined; but, in a *permanent* system, are we to be told that no definite organization or form of government is laid down?

In the Mosaic economy, specific instructions are given for the adjustment of all the parts of the system—the furniture of the temple, its altars and its offerings, its priests and its services, the worshipers and their duties, the fasts and the feasts, the ordinances and the commandments, all, *all* these are deemed sufficiently important to receive the divine regard—but are the organization and government of the Christian Church to be passed over as mere circumstances, as matters of indifference, or of so trivial importance that all men are to be left to the entire guidance of their own peculiar notions of fitness, propriety, or expediency? To our mind, the analogical argument based upon the peculiar character of the Mosaic institution, and its connection with the gospel, furnishes strong, presumptive evidence against the hypothesis, that “no particular form of Church-government is laid down in the New Testament.”

2. Our next argument upon this question is based upon *the essential identity of the Church under both the Jewish and Christian dispensations.*

Upon this point, we adopt the remarks of Mr. Watson in his Biblical and Theological Dictionary—Art. “CHURCH”:

“The Christian Church is not another Church, but the very same that was before the coming of Christ, having the same faith with it, and interested in the same covenant. Great alterations, indeed, were made in the outward state and condition of the Church by the coming of the Messiah. The carnal privileges of the Jews, in their separation from other nations to give birth to the Messiah, then failed, and with that also their claim on that account to be the children of Abraham. The ordinances of worship suited to that state of things then expired, and came to an end. New ordinances of worship were appointed, suitable to the new light and grace which were then bestowed upon the Church. The Gentiles came into the faith of Abraham along with the Jews, being made joint-partakers with them in his blessing. But none of these things, nor the whole collectively, did make such an alteration in the Church, but that it was still one and the same. The olive-tree was still the same, only some branches were broken off, and others grafted into it.”

When we see, therefore, that the Church of God is the same Church under the gospel that it was under the law, is it reasonable to suppose that under the law there should be a specific organization and ecclesi-

astical polity, divinely prescribed, but that under the gospel there is no divine prescription on the subject? Under the law, the Church of God was a divine institution—a society or community of persons organized and placed under an ecclesiastical regimen or government by the authority of God. Now, if under the gospel there be no society or association of persons organized, and placed under a system of ecclesiastical regimen or government, by the appointment and authority of God, we demand, how can two societies, or associations, be essentially the same, when so radically variant, in all that is necessary to constitute a society?

If there be no Church-government laid down in the New Testament, as of divine authority, then it follows that the New Testament Church is under no government whatever, or under a government of human origin and authority. But, as we have seen, the Old Testament Church was under a government of divine origin and authority. Now, if it be said that the New Testament Church is under no government at all, then, we ask, how can a society or Church, under an organization and government of divine authority, be essentially the same with a society or Church destitute of any organization or government whatever? Organization and government seem to us to be essential to the very existence of a society or Church. How, then, we repeat, can a society or Church, under an organization and government of divine origin, be essentially the same with something which is destitute of what is essential to the very existence of a society or Church? But if it be said that the New Testament Church is under an organization and government of human origin and authority, then, we ask, how such a society can be essentially the same with one divinely constituted?

3. Our third argument on this subject is founded upon the fact that Christ and the gospel Church are, in Scripture, designated by terms and appellations, necessarily implying a specific and definite organization and government.

In the Old Testament, the language of prophecy speaks of the coming Messiah and of gospel times in terms which can scarcely be intelligibly interpreted, but upon the supposition that Christ has instituted a Church with a specific organization and government.

The Messiah is repeatedly spoken of by the prophets as a *King*, and his Church as a *kingdom*. "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Ps. ii. 6-8. Here the Messiah is

denominated a King. He is represented as publishing his laws—"I will declare the decree"—and as extending his dominion over the Gentiles—"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance," etc.

In Isa. ix. 6, 7, he is styled the "Prince of Peace;" and it is added: "Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end." Isa. xxxii. 1: "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment." Dan. ii. 44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom," etc.

But in what sense, we ask, are we to understand these predictions? Surely no Christian will construe them, like the blinded Jew, as referring to an earthly monarch. While we do not construe the kingdom of Messiah as referring to an earthly monarchy, on the other hand we should not restrict it to the internal dominion over the heart, and thus fall into the error of the Mystic or the Quaker. Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world;" but, at the same time, he came to establish a new institution of a peculiarly excellent order. He said to Peter: "On this rock will I build my Church;" hence it is evident that the kingdom of Messiah, foretold by prophets, was not only to consist of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost—of internal principles of holiness—but it was to consist of an outward, visible Church. Assuming, then, that the kingdom of Christ referred to by the prophets embraced the visible gospel Church, we now ask, how can we reconcile the language of prophecy with the supposition that there is no Church-government and polity established by Christ and his apostles? What is a kingdom without laws, and a regular administration of those laws?

In allusion to the Jewish kingdom, Isaiah speaks of the Messiah as sitting "on the throne of David to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice." Does this language favor the idea that he was to leave his Church without a government of his own ordination? Daniel, after having described the various leading earthly monarchies, declares: "In the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven *set up a kingdom*," etc. Here we ask, How can a kingdom be "set up" by "the God of heaven," unless the organization and government be of divine origin and authority? Whoever will carefully attend to the manner in which the prophets of the Old Testament habitually spoke of the Messiah and his reign, will not be likely to conclude that the *prima facie* evidence, from that source, favors the notion that there is no government prescribed for the New Testament Church

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV.

QUESTION 1. On what is the first Scripture argument on this subject founded?

2. How is the relation between the law and the gospel shown?

3. In what respects are the two dispensations contrasted?

4. In what particulars were the instructions as to the Mosaic economy specific?

5. Upon what is the next argument based?

6. What is the substance of the position here taken by Watson?

7. How is it shown that the position,

that "no form of government is established for the New Testament Church," is irreconcilable with the *identity* of the Church under the two dispensations?

8. Upon what is the third argument on this subject founded?

9. What are some of the terms of the Old Testament designating the Church under Messiah?

10. Can these scriptures be reconciled with the position that there is no visible organized Church set up by Christ and his apostles?

CHAPTER V

FORM OF CHURCH-GOVERNMENT—SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY—THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BEFORE we proceed to examine the New Testament on this subject, it is important for us to understand the precise point of inquiry now before us; therefore we will consider, first, what is implied in "a particular form of government"—what is necessary to constitute it. We think it probable that much of the difficulty on this subject has resulted from a misapprehension at this point. Many have hastily imbibed the notion that unless a *minute detail* be exhibited of all things, great and small, which properly should be connected with a constitutional government, no form of government whatever can be established. With this preconceived and erroneous basis fixed in their minds, they have opened the New Testament, and, failing to find that minute detail of parts and particulars which they had conceived essential to a "form of government," they have assumed that none whatever has been established; and that, consequently, all are left perfectly free to the guidance of their own views of propriety or expediency.

In reference to this subject, persons have erred in two opposite extremes. Some have supposed that every thing, great and small, proper to be connected with Church organization and government, is expressly laid down in Scripture; and that, consequently, no regulation, however minute, should be sanctioned in the Church, unless we can find it expressly taught in the New Testament. Others have concluded that on the subject of Church-government no system, form, outline, or constitutional basis, has been prescribed; and that therefore no one form is of greater obligation than another. Now, the true position will be found between these two extremes.

If it be found, upon the examination of the New Testament, that the organization and government of the Christian Church have *not* been exhibited in *minute detail*, then it will follow that, in regard to that *minute detail*, all Christians are left to the guidance of their own judgment of propriety or expediency. On the other hand, if it be found

that the organization and government of the Christian Church have been exhibited, *so far as some great leading principles are concerned*, either by the official acts of the apostles, in establishing or setting the Church in order, or by their instructions authoritatively delivered, then it will follow that, in regard to those great leading principles, all Christians are under sacred obligations, as far as practicable, to conform to those divinely instituted regulations.

Contemplating the fact that the Christian Church is an institution designed to be extended throughout "all the world," and to be perpetuated to the latest period of its history, and at the same time reflecting on the almost endlessly diversified circumstances of mankind throughout this widely-extended and long-continued range, it could scarcely be inferred, judging *a priori*, that the government of the Church, in *minute detail*, should be divinely prescribed, and thus rendered authoritatively binding throughout all ages, and amongst all nations. On the other hand, in view of the important facts that the Christian religion is, and of necessity must be, essentially the same in all climes and in all ages, that human nature is also essentially the same in all places where the gospel is to be proclaimed, that the Christian Church is an institution claiming to be divine in its origin, and designed to be perpetuated to the end of the world; in view of all these facts, it would seem unreasonable, judging *a priori*, to suppose that no *great leading principles*, pertaining to the organization and government of this Church, should be divinely prescribed. And if it can be shown that although the *minute detail* is omitted, yet some *great leading principles* of Church-government are set forth in the New Testament, then these *leading principles* will constitute a "form of Church-government;" nor can they be any the less such, because the minute detail is omitted.

Some constitutions are exceedingly brief, containing only the great principles on which the government is based, while others are more extensive, going farther into detail. Would any one conclude, merely because a constitution is brief, that the principles it embraces are therefore of less authority, or that the constitution is any the less a constitution, or a government, or a "form of government," on that account? Surely not; hence we conclude that if it can be shown that Christ and his apostles prescribed certain *leading principles* pertaining to the organization and government of the Christian Church, then they did, to the same extent, establish a "form of Church-government." And so far as they did thus establish it, it is divinely authoritative; and all Christians, in all places and in all ages, are in duty bound to conform to "the pattern thus shown them in the mount."

The principles essential to the organization and government of the Christian Church, and the Articles of Faith essential to salvation, are few in number, and simple and comprehensive in character. From the incipency of the papal apostasy to the present day, a disposition to multiply and extend Church-rules and Articles of Faith beyond their legitimate and authorized limits has been the bane of the Church. In numerous instances the "law of God" has been made void by "the commandments of men," or supplanted by the "traditions of the elders."

On the other hand, oppressed by the tyrannical usurpations of such as would be "lords over God's heritage," some have rushed to an opposite extreme. In some instances they have gone so far as to discard all organization, or agreed plan of government; thus giving loose rein to the wildest anarchy or the most reckless latitudinarianism. The proper scriptural medium lies between these two extremes. There *are* some great leading principles clearly laid down in the New Testament as necessary to the proper organization of the Christian Church, and some great radical doctrines essential to salvation. These, whatever they may be found to be, must be recognized, or the Church cannot be erected on the scriptural basis. For illustration, as all must admit, the New Testament teaches:

1. That all organized Churches, under the apostolic administration, had public meetings for worship at appointed times and places.
2. That Church officers were appointed to superintend the public worship and other interests of the Church.
3. That baptism and the Lord's-supper were administered to all—the former, on their first profession of the Christian faith; the latter, frequently at the regular meetings of the Church.

Various other items might be enumerated, but these are enough to show that there are *some important matters* pertaining to the organization and government of the Church clearly laid down in the New Testament.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER V.

- QUESTION 1. What difficulty has resulted from not understanding what is implied in "a particular form of government"?
2. How have persons erred on this subject in two opposite extremes?
 3. In what two different senses may we suppose that the government of the Christian Church might have been exhibited by Christ and his apostles?
 4. Why is it improbable that the Christian Church should have been exhibited in *minute detail*?
 5. Why is it unreasonable that *no great leading principles* should be given?
 6. How do various *constitutions* differ from each other?
 7. What will follow from the fact that no *minute detail* has been divinely prescribed?
 8. What will follow from the fact that *great leading principles* have been laid down?
 9. What is said of the *essential* principles relating to Church-government and of the Articles of Faith?
 10. What has been a prevalent error in reference to them?
 11. To what opposite extreme have others gone?
 12. What three specifications are given showing that some leading principles of government are prescribed?

CHAPTER VI.

THE HIGHEST GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY — ORIGINALLY VESTED IN
THE APOSTLES.

THE New Testament sets forth the principles and laws according to which the Christian Church should be organized and governed, and designates proper officers for the administration of its government, and specifies their prerogatives and qualifications.

In all governments, whether civil or ecclesiastical, the supreme or highest power is vested somewhere; and the first thing to be considered in the investigation of the genius and character of a government is, the depository and source of this power and authority.

That the highest authority must be deposited in some definite source, is just as essential in the Church as in the State. The various denominations of Christians, in the respective systems they have established, have vested the highest power in different sources. Few seem to have taken much pains to inquire at the proper oracle for information on this subject; although much has been written concerning the peculiar advantages of different systems of Church-government, resulting from that feature by which the depository of the highest authority is fixed, yet too seldom has the inquiry been made: What saith the Bible on the subject?

If, on any question connected with the Church, the teachings of the Holy Scriptures are deemed important, surely on this great radical question we should bow with the most implicit reverence and submission to what God has been pleased to ordain and establish.

Upon this question, among the various orders of professed Christians, there are five different leading views:

1. That the highest authority in the Church is vested in *each congregation of Christians collectively*. This is the theory of the Congregationalists and Independents.

2. That it is vested in *the Pope*, or some *one individual*, constituted the visible head of the Church. This is the theory of the Roman Catholics, or Papists.

3. That it is vested in *the ministers and lay officers taken together*. This is the theory of the Presbyterians.

4. That it is vested in *a superior order in the ministry*, constituted, as to the power of government and ordination, the apostles' successors. This is the theory of Protestant Episcopalians.

5. That it is vested in the ordained ministry, or eldership of *the Church generally*. This is the view of the Methodists, and of individuals in different denominations.

So far as we are informed, all the different views on this subject worthy of attention are embraced in the five different systems above specified. As to the notions of those who contend that "no particular form of Church-government is prescribed in Scripture," it is clear that their theory necessarily implies that the highest power in the Church is not, by divine authority, assigned any definite position, and that, consequently, all Christians are left to arrange this principle of their constitution as they may judge expedient.

In the discussion of this subject, we deem it unnecessary to enter upon the formal refutation of any of the conflicting theories specified. If it can be shown from the Scriptures in whom the highest power in the government of the Church is vested, it will follow by consequence that all conflicting theories are disproved. That the Scriptures are explicit and satisfactory on this question is our clear conviction, and we shall present the evidence on which that conviction is founded.

It cannot be doubted but that the holy apostles were invested with all the divine authority connected with the great work of their mission—the establishment and organization of the gospel Church—which the Saviour himself possessed. From this it necessarily follows that, as the Saviour had power to delegate his authority to the apostles, so had the apostles power to delegate their authority to others. It follows also, that if the apostles have failed to transmit to others the high authority for the ordering and government of the Church which they received of the Lord Jesus, that authority must have expired with them, and can exist nowhere in the Church. It *can* only exist where the apostles have placed it, and there it *must* exist. Therefore, if the high power of government in question exists in the collective body of each congregation, or any portion of them, it must be *because* the apostles themselves have thus transmitted it, and ordained its perpetuity. It will not do to argue that all societies possess the inherent right to govern themselves. Such reasoning may be valid when civil government or *human* institutions are in question; but in reference to a *divine* institution it is futile and inadmissible.

In the "beginning of Christ's religion" it is most certain that the power of government was not in the congregations or Churches collectively, but in the ministers who organized them. Ministers were before Churches were—Churches did not make or ordain the ministers, but ministers made or constituted Churches. Now, is it not undeniable that, as the highest power of government originally existed, not in the united congregation of the people, but in the ministry, it must remain in the ministry, unless it be fairly shown that the apostles have expressly ordered otherwise?

But that we may decide this matter, we will examine the record of the teachings and doings of the apostles bearing upon the subject. We commence with the establishment of the first Christian Church at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. About three thousand were added unto the Church by baptism on this occasion. In the account here given, there is not one word about the apostles delegating to this large community, or to any portion of them, the right to make their own regulations and govern themselves; on the contrary, it is obvious that this right remained in the apostles, and was exercised by them.

It is said (Acts ii. 42): "And they continued steadfastly in the *apostles'* doctrine and fellowship"—clearly implying that they were still under the jurisdiction of the apostles.

A few days after this about two thousand more were added to the Church; and still we find no evidence of the transfer of the governmental authority from the apostles, but direct proof to the contrary. So full and complete was the apostolic jurisdiction, that, when the people had sold their possessions, "they brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet." Acts iv. 34, 35. Here we find that even the temporal treasures of the Church were subjected to the control of the apostles.

But it may be contended that we find a transfer of governmental authority in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, when the "seven deacons" were appointed. The passage reads thus: "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom *we may appoint* over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

Now, it is contended that the right of electing the deacons was here transferred to the body of the Church—"the multitude of the disciples"—and that, consequently, with this elective franchise was **trans**

ferred the governing power in the Church. In reference to this transaction we remark, that the mere fact that the apostles chose to consult the congregation as to the particular persons to be appointed deacons, does not prove that the jurisdiction of the apostles in the premises had been relinquished. As the particular exigency giving rise to the appointment of the deacons at this time was an existing dissatisfaction in a portion of the congregation with the administration of affairs, it is quite reasonable to suppose that skillful governors might consult the choice of the congregation, even in a matter over which the entire authority and jurisdiction vested in themselves; and, as an evidence that such was the fact in the present instance, we remark the following particulars:

1. The congregation did not choose these "deacons" till they had been *directed* so to do by the apostles; hence they were not exercising an independent authority of their own, but merely acting by permission, under direction of the apostles.

2. The apostles prescribed the character of the persons to be selected.

3. There is no evidence that the apostles would have ordained persons of a different character, had such been selected.

4. The *right of appointment* was still retained by the apostles in their own hands. The apostles did not direct the congregation to *select* and *appoint* their own "deacons." The command was: "Look ye out seven men whom *we may appoint*." And, after they had been selected, they were not "deacons" until "they had set them before the apostles," and *they* had "prayed, and *laid their hands on them*." So we can find no evidence in this transaction of any settlement of the sovereign power in the whole or any portion of the congregation; nor is there any proof that St. Peter, or any one of the apostles, was placed in authority over the others. The supreme authority was evidently in the "twelve," without partition or preëminence.

In the fifteenth chapter of The Acts, we have an account of the famous Apostolic Council at Jerusalem. Here we derive satisfactory evidence against the Congregational system of Church-polity, in its common acceptance. Had the apostles delegated to each congregation the sovereign right to govern themselves, independently of any superior jurisdiction or authority, we may be sure the Church at Antioch would have exercised that right, and settled their controversy in their own body.

Again: Had each individual Church been constituted an independent body, the decrees of the council in question could not have been issued as an official, authoritative document, obligatory on the Churches of

"Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia," as they evidently were; and had each Church been constituted an independent body, then the action of the council could not have assumed the form it did. A council might have deliberated and come to a conclusion, but that conclusion would have been mere *advice*, and not *law*; but the very form in which the action of the council is recorded, demonstrates that it possessed the attribute of authority and law. St. James says: "Wherefore my *sentence* is," etc.—that is, my *decision*; or, as Chrysostom paraphrases it. "I with *authority* say this."

We learn, also, from this transaction, that St. Peter had not been constituted the supreme visible head of the Church. Had such been the fact, the appeal would have been made to him, and the sentence would have gone forth in his name and under his authority; but he seems to have had no preëminence whatever. He did not even preside in the council—St. James was the presiding officer. *He* spoke last, and formally announced the decision; but we cannot infer from this that he possessed any right to decide this question more than belonged to each of the other apostles. His apparent superiority resulted, no doubt, from the circumstance of his acting as President of the council; and that fact is readily accounted for on the probable supposition that, by an understanding among the apostles, the special jurisdiction over the Church at Jerusalem had been assigned to him.

The appeal was made to "the apostles," "the apostles" assembled together on the occasion, "the apostles" agreed unanimously in the decision, and the official document was issued in the name of "the apostles;" and all this without any evidence of the preëminence of one over the others. Hence it appears that the apostles were still exercising that supreme authority over the Church with which they had originally been invested by the Lord Jesus.

But the inquiry may arise, If the apostles were thus supremely authorized, could not any one of them have decided the question? and whence the necessity for calling the council? To this it may be replied, that this council was not convened for the purpose of enlightening the apostles, but to give greater influence to their decision, and secure harmony in the Church. Any one of the apostles could have decided the question; and Paul and Barnabas had already decided it. They "had no small dissension and disputation" with a portion of the Church at Antioch on the subject; but the authority of every apostle, and especially that of St. Paul, was not everywhere understood and acknowledged as it should have been. It was to remedy this evil, and to produce an acquiescence in the apostolic doctrine of justification by faith

alone, that this council deliberated, and issued their joint authoritative decrees.

If it be alleged that the fact that the apostles assembled to deliberate in council cannot comport with the view we have presented of the high prerogatives with which they were endowed, we reply: *First*. The "much disputing" which occurred in the council does not appear to have been a work of the apostles, but of others assembled with them. *Secondly*. The apostles spoke last of all, and were perfectly harmonious in their sentiments. *Thirdly*. It does not follow, from the fact that the apostles were inspired, that they were at all times favored so immediately with the divine guidance as entirely to supersede the importance of deliberation. *Fourthly*. It is evident that, in this matter, they acted under the immediate authority of God; for their decrees are prefaced with these words: "For it seemed good to the *Holy Ghost*, and to us."

But there is yet another important matter in connection with this council to be considered—the apostles were not *alone* on this occasion. The appeal was made unto "the apostles *and elders*." "The apostles *and elders* came together to consider of this matter;" the decision "pleased the apostles *and elders*, with the *whole Church*;" the epistle containing the decrees was in the name of "the apostles, *and elders, and brethren*," and when the messengers went forth to the Churches, "they delivered them the decrees for to keep that were ordained of the apostles *and elders* which were at Jerusalem." Here the question arises, Who were these "elders and brethren?" and why are they associated with the apostles? The Presbyterian has fancied that the account here given furnishes a clear divine warrant for depositing the sovereign power of Church-government in the Kirk-session, composed of the minister and several lay elders; or a model for a presbytery or synod, composed of clerical and lay representatives.

As to the peculiar character of these "elders"—whether they were ministers or mere laymen—that is a question which can have no bearing upon the point now in hand. Our present inquiry is this: Did the apostles transmit to these "elders" the right to exercise that sovereign power in the Church which, as we have seen, they themselves had received of the Lord Jesus? We do not inquire whether the apostles so transferred this power out of their hands upon these "elders" as to cease to possess it themselves. No one supposes they did this. But the question is, Were these elders divinely authorized by the apostles to exercise the same sovereign jurisdiction over the Church which the apostles exercised?

We think that the mere fact that the Church at Antioch sent their

question up to "the apostles and elders" can furnish no evidence that these "elders" possessed authority equal to that of the apostles. The fact that the contentious Judaizers of that Church were not at once satisfied with the decision and arguments of Paul and Barnabas, is proof conclusive that they either did not understand or did not appreciate the high prerogatives of the apostolic office; hence they desired the apostles' decision to be corroborated by the sanction of the elders of the first established Church at Jerusalem. It is also reasonable to suppose that the great body of the Church at Antioch, however well satisfied they themselves might be with the judgment of Paul and Barnabas, would desire also the corroborating testimony of the "apostles and elders," knowing that such decision would tend greatly to the production of general satisfaction on the vexed question.

But it seems the elders did meet with the apostles, and probably took part in the deliberation; and it is demanded, Why did the apostles permit this, unless the elders possessed equal powers with themselves? To this we reply, that although the apostles possessed the right, *ex cathedrâ*, to decide all matters concerning the Church, yet they were prudent administrators, and, as such, they frequently consulted with others, and were ready to listen to their arguments. When the "seven deacons" were appointed, although the apostles possessed in themselves the sovereign *right* of appointment, yet they submitted their selection to the congregation. Even so here, although the apostles, as a college, or any one of them alone, possessed a divine right to decide the matter in controversy, yet they chose to exercise that right in such form as would be likely to wield the greatest influence over the Churches generally, and be productive of the most satisfactory and beneficial results. Hence, not only "the elders" were consulted, but the approval of "the whole Church" was secured, and the decretal epistle was in the name of "the apostles, and elders, and brethren."

The only question involved in the matter we are now discussing is that of *authority*. Did the "elders," or "the elders and brethren," possess the same divine authority to act in the premises which belonged to the apostles? To suppose that they did, would imply that they could have decided the matter without the ratification of the apostles—yea, that any one of them could have issued a divinely authoritative decision; for it is certain that the official act of any one of the apostles would have been clothed with all the authority of Heaven. But will any one suppose that a decision from one of the "elders," or from "the elders and the whole Church," would have been authoritative without the apostolic seal? It was *this* which fixed upon the decrees the stamp of

the divine authority. The Lord Jesus Christ had said to his chosen "twelve": "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." It was this unfailling promise which secured to the apostles, in all their official acts, the divine guidance, and authorized them to preface their decrees with these remarkable words: "It seemed good to *the Holy Ghost*, and to us."

We think it must now be manifest that the history of this council presents no proof that the sovereign power in the government of the Church belonged as yet to any person or persons but the apostles.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What is the first thing to be considered in the investigation of the character of a government?</p> <p>2. What five leading views are stated with regard to the depository of the highest authority in Church-government, and by whom have they been respectively advocated?</p> <p>3. Are the Scriptures explicit on this question?</p> <p>4. What may we infer from the authority with which the apostles were invested?</p> <p>5. In the beginning of Christ's religion, why could not the power of government have existed in the congregations?</p> <p>6. What is proved on the subject from the second and fourth chapters of The Acts of the Apostles?</p> | <p>7. What is the argument in reference to the "seven deacons," whose appointment is recorded in the sixth chapter of The Acts?</p> <p>8. In reference to this case, what <i>four facts</i> are inferred?</p> <p>9. What is the argument on the subject founded on the account given of the council at Jerusalem, in the fifteenth chapter of The Acts?</p> <p>10. Who met with the apostles in this council?</p> <p>11. Were the apostles all harmonious in their opinions?</p> <p>12. Were the decrees of the council <i>authoritative</i>?</p> <p>13. What <i>fact</i> gave them the seal of divine authority?</p> <p>14. In whom, then, does it appear that the sovereign power of government as yet was deposited?</p> |
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CHAPTER VII.

THE GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY—DEPOSITED IN THE ORDAINED
ELDERSHIP.

HAVING seen in the preceding chapter that the inspired apostles, while they remained with the Church, possessed and exercised supreme governmental control over it, we now inquire to whom they committed the permanent exercise of this prerogative.

In the first place, that Timothy and Titus, as evangelists, were commissioned by the Apostle Paul to exercise, under his directions, apostolic jurisdiction—the one at Ephesus, and the other in Crete—is very clear from the apostolic epistles. That this jurisdiction extended not only over Churches, but likewise over ministers, is also manifest. But there is no evidence that the apostles placed a similar control in the hands of an individual minister over the ministers and Churches generally, or in any other place.

Now, the question arises, what is the reasonable inference from the fact, as above stated? That we may be the better judge of this matter, we will examine the record. In 1 Tim. i. 3, 4, St. Paul says to Timothy: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith; so do." And in the eighteenth verse: "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy," etc. Here we see a solemn charge committed by St. Paul to Timothy, imparting jurisdictional prerogative over the Church at Ephesus, both of the ministers and laity.

In the third chapter of this epistle, St. Paul delivers to Timothy minute instructions as to the character and qualifications of bishops and deacons. And this is evidently done that Timothy might be the better able to select and ordain suitable persons for those offices, and retain only such in office; or, at least, call the unworthy to account for improper conduct. He says: "Let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless." Near the

close of the chapter, St. Paul adds: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mightest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God."

In the fourth chapter, after having delivered various directions and admonitions concerning the doctrine that should be preached, he says: "These things *command* and teach. Let no man despise thy youth"—that is, not only teach the pastors what they should preach, but "*command*" them, exercise authority over them; and lest they be unwilling to be supervised by so young a man, take heed to be grave in thy deportment—"Let no man despise thy youth."

In the fifth chapter, Timothy is instructed how to proceed in admonishing the "elders": "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father." In the same chapter we read: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his reward. Against an elder, receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins."

We think it must be apparent to the candid mind that no consistent interpretation can be put upon this paragraph without finding in it the most conclusive evidence that Timothy was invested with the high prerogatives of the apostolate, both as it regards government and ordination.

First. His jurisdiction extended even to the matter of the ministers' salaries: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor." Chrysostom, Whitby, Scott, Benson, Clarke, and all the best critics, agree that this "double honor" means "a more liberal maintenance." Dr. Clarke affirms that "almost every critic of note allows that *τιμή* here signifies reward, stipend, wages." Now Timothy, as exercising apostolic rule over pastors and Churches, was to see to it that the pastors' salaries were adjusted in proportion to the extent of their labors.

Again. Instructions were given as to the manner in which an elder should be brought to account for his conduct: "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." He is also directed how he should administer reproofs: "Them that sin rebuke before all." He is solemnly charged to "observe these things without preferring one before another."

Lastly. He is not only fully instructed as to his superintendency over elders, deacons, and people, but he is directed how to proceed in the exercise of his apostolic jurisdiction.

Near the close of this Epistle St. Paul repeats his solemn charge to Timothy in the following words: "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." And again he adds: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust." We may understand the apostle here, by the word "commandment," as embracing the entire summary of instruction contained in this Epistle. *This* he is charged to keep "until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." On this Dr. Clarke comments thus: "Hand it down pure, and let thy conduct be a comment on it, that it may continue in the world and in the Church till the coming of Christ."

In the second Epistle to Timothy we have his ordination and investiture, with the prerogatives of his office, specifically named: "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." 2 Tim. i. 6. "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." 2 Tim. i. 14. "And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." 2 Tim. ii. 2.

In these passages we see Timothy expressly authorized to invest other "faithful men" with the ministerial functions, implying provision for the perpetuation of an ordained ministry in the Church.

We next examine the Epistle to Titus. In the fifth verse of the first chapter, the investiture of Titus with the prerogatives of the apostolate is set forth: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Notice, first, the work assigned him: He is to "set in order the things that are wanting." This is a general, broad commission, embracing every thing pertaining to the organization of the Churches. St. Paul proceeds, as he had done in the case of Timothy, to specify the kind of persons to be ordained to the presbyterate: "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faith-

ful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, . . . whose mouths must be stopped." And in the nineteenth verse, he commands Titus to "rebuke" false teachers "sharply."

Again, in the fifteenth verse of the second chapter, we read these words: "These things speak, and exhort, and *rebuke with all authority*." In the tenth verse of the third chapter, we have these words: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject."

On the subject of the quotations just made we need not enlarge. They are so explicit concerning the authority with which Titus was invested that their force cannot easily be evaded. We here find, first, a minute description of the kind of persons to be ordained to the ministerial office. Secondly, Titus is instructed to silence some, for the apostle designates certain characters "whose mouths must be stopped."

Again, he is instructed on the subject of official admonitions. He is told to "rebuke with all authority." Not only to deliver a *friendly* "rebuke," but an *authoritative* one—to "rebuke with *all authority*." Finally, he is clothed with authority to *excommunicate*: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject."

In reference to Timothy and Titus, we present the following general remarks:

From the scriptures adduced, it is evident that neither the Congregational nor the Presbyterian form of Church-government could have existed in those districts at that time. On the supposition that either of those forms of government had already been set up, these itinerant *intruders*, as they would have been considered, would have been promptly met by the congregations or the Church-sessions, as the case might have been, and repulsed with such language as the following: "What high and unconstitutional pretensions are *these* which you set up over us? We *elect* and *induct* our own pastors; we have our Church-session through which we administer discipline, our presbyters judge of the qualifications of candidates for orders, and perform the ordination service." It is most evident, upon the supposition that either Congregationalism or Presbyterianism had been set up, that the commissions of Timothy and Titus would have come in direct conflict with those systems, and could not have been carried out. And it is also clear that, while those Churches continued to recognize Timothy and Titus with the authority committed to them by the apostle, neither of those forms of government could have originated. That the power of government, in these instances, was vested in Timothy and Titus, is

undeniable. It was neither exercised by the congregation collectively, nor by the minister in connection with his lay elders.

The argument for High-church Episcopalianism, founded on the cases of Timothy and Titus, may easily be shown to be sophistical, when met in a proper, scriptural manner. It is not, however, to be overturned by a denial of the fact that Timothy and Titus were invested with episcopal jurisdiction over both Churches and ministers in their respective fields for a specific purpose, and under apostolic appointment. The sophistry in the argument referred to consists in concluding from this fact, that therefore this was the settled apostolic plan, adopted by the apostles everywhere, and by them commanded to be carried out and perpetuated.

It cannot be proved that the apostolic jurisdiction of Timothy and Titus was a permanent settlement of authority in them. Indeed, it is most obvious that they acted in the capacity of temporary agents of St. Paul, doing his specific bidding in reference to matters to which he had not time to give his personal attention.

Again, the fact that the Churches of Ephesus and Crete, and the ministers already among them, were apostolically recognized as such before the episcopal miter, here claimed for Timothy and Titus, had been conferred, together with the fact that, among the numerous other Churches organized, and ministers set apart, under the apostolic administration, there is no intimation that any such arrangement as that in reference to Timothy and Titus was intended or authorized, demonstrates clearly that the plea here urged for Episcopalianism, as of *divine right*, is unfounded and fallacious. We can find nothing in the case of these evangelists, or anywhere else in Scripture, to sanction the position that the office of a bishop pertains to an *order* in the ministry superior to that of a presbyter, and by *divine right* having control over the eldership, and the sole right to ordain. We must conclude that this is an assumption of prerogative wholly unwarranted by the word of God.

Yet since it is clear that Timothy and Titus were endued with a temporary episcopal jurisdiction over ministers and Churches in their respective fields, we may very rationally infer that, under some circumstances, the episcopal form of government may be preferable to any other; and *on the ground of expediency*, not of *divine right*, may advantageously be adopted.

From what has been already presented from the Scriptures, we think the following positions are manifestly inferable:

1. That during the lives of the inspired apostles, supreme authority,

not only to unfold the doctrines of Christianity, but also to organize and govern the Church, was divinely vested in them.

2. That the apostles exercised this authority, so far as practicable, by their own personal agency and immediate supervision, but that in the work of organizing and governing the Churches, as a matter of convenience, they sometimes intrusted their high prerogative to certain approved evangelists (as Timothy and Titus), under specific instructions, as their selected agents or deputies.

3. But since there is no evidence that these high prerogatives of government, so clearly pertaining to the inspired apostles and the evangelists under them, were transferred to any others, therefore the inference is plain that such apostolic prerogatives were *extraordinary*, and not intended to be perpetuated in the Church.

4. Since it is indisputable that many Churches existed under the apostolic administration, over whom no minister was placed as superintendent over ministers and Churches, with such high prerogatives as were conferred on Timothy at Ephesus, and Titus in Crete, it necessarily follows that, though an episcopal organization after that model may be *expedient* and *advisable* in certain cases, yet there is no ground for the inference that such high prerogatives pertain to any class of ministers by *divine right*, or in virtue of a superiority of *order*; or that other Churches, not thus superintended, are not apostolically constituted, nor the ordinances by them administered valid and efficacious.

Where, it may well be asked, is the first syllable of testimony to show that the apostles placed the Churches at Rome, at Corinth, at Thessalonica, at Antioch, at Philippi, or even at Jerusalem, under a jurisdiction like unto that given to Timothy at Ephesus, or to Titus in Crete? And yet *these* were all *bona fide* apostolic Churches, the inspired apostles themselves being the judges. Can it therefore, we demand, be consistent with Christian meekness for any one claiming to be a follower of Christ to denounce as no branch of *the Church* such Churches as the inspired apostles themselves planted and watered, and recognized?

That episcopacy, in the modern acceptance of the term, cannot be maintained from the Scriptures as of *divine right*, or as essential to the *validity*, or even to the *apostolicity*, of either Churches, ministers, or sacraments, is a position, in connection with Church-polity, which we consider perfectly impregnable. The impartial student of ecclesiastical history will find that the same ground that we here assume has been occupied by many of the wisest and best informed in the Church from the earliest ages, and at all subsequent periods. It was the platform of

Cyprian in the third century, of Epiphanius and Jerome in the fourth century, and was maintained by Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, Wesley, and a mighty host of distinguished scholars and divines, in more modern times. This position is not only more consonant with Scripture, but is certainly more consistent with the mild charity and wide-expansive catholicity of the gospel than that pent-up and exclusive dogma which struts forth in assumed dignity, exclaiming, "We are *the* Church: with us alone are Christ's valid ministers, and all others are intruders—with us alone are the valid ordinances administered, and the covenanted mercies of Heaven sealed!" Let episcopacy, as the Bible warrants, place itself on the ground of expediency, and bishops above presbyters, as Jerome says, "by the custom of the Church," and not of *divine right*, and many others may, with Wesley, "prefer the episcopal form of Church-government."

If, then, as we have endeavored to show, the apostles have not transferred the high prerogatives of Church-government which they possessed and exercised to a superior *order* in the ministry to be perpetuated in the Church as their successors in this jurisdiction, the question arises, To whom did they transfer the governmental power of the Church? and in what sense is this power to be understood?

To the above inquiry we reply, that the New Testament teaches plainly that *the government of the Church is committed to the ordained presbyters, or elders.*

This will appear from the following scriptures: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*." Acts xx. 28. The term here used, *ἐπισκόπους*, means bishops, or superintendents; hence the apostle here teaches that these Ephesian elders were constituted by "the Holy Ghost" the rulers of the Churches. Again, the same apostle, in specifying the qualifications of an "elder," says, he should be "one that *ruleth* well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to *rule* his own house, how shall he *take care* of the Church of God?" 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.

St. Peter says to the "elders": "Feed the flock of God which is among you, *taking the oversight thereof*." 1 Pet. v. 2. The Greek word here used is *ἐπισκοποῦντες*, meaning that these "elders" were to exercise the office of *bishop, overseer, or superintendent*, over the Church, clearly implying an apostolic delegation of the ruling power to them. Once more, St. Paul says: "Obey them that have *the rule over you*, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give *account*." Heb. xiii. 17. Here it is manifest that the *ruling power* is

the Churches is vested in those ministers who are placed over them as their pastors or spiritual guides.

In the second and third chapters of the book of Revelation, our Saviour delivers a special and solemn address to the "angel" of each of the seven principal Churches of Asia. From these addresses we think it apparent that the power of government in each of those Churches was neither in the whole congregation nor in the minister and his lay elders, but in the presiding minister placed as "overseer" in pastoral charge of the Church. Thomas Scott says this angel was "the stated messenger, or ambassador, of Christ among them." Benson says, he was "the pastor, presiding elder, or bishop, called an angel because he was God's messenger." Dr. Clarke says: "By '*angel*,' we are to understand the *messenger*, or person sent by God to preside over this Church." And in reference to Ephesus, he adds: "The angel or bishop at this time was most probably *Timothy*, who presided over that Church before St. John took up his residence there, and who is supposed to have continued in that office till A.D. 97."

Critics and commentators are agreed that the "angel" was the messenger, bishop, or pastor, presiding over the Church at the time; hence it appears that the power of government in these Churches, respectively, was vested in this "angel." To *him* the addresses were sent. *He* is admonished, censured, or threatened with punishment for the disorder or heresy of the Church. Now, if the power of government was in the hands of the whole congregation, or of the minister and lay elders, why is this "angel" *alone* held responsible? Upon the supposition that in each of those Churches the minister in charge was invested with the power of government, the whole matter is plain; but upon any other hypothesis, it is inexplicable.

From the scriptural proofs presented, it is unquestionable that the right of government and the administration of the discipline of the Churches are placed in the hands of the elders, or ministers, having the pastoral charge thereof. But as there is no specific restriction or instruction to the contrary, they may of course, so far as they deem it expedient, exercise this governing power through the medium of councils, conventions, synods, conferences, or presbyteries; or they may commit the exercise of a portion of this prerogative to certain chief ministers, styled bishops, general superintendents, or presiding elders. And that such was the practice of the Church, even in apostolic times, we have ample evidence in the history of the famous council at Jerusalem, and in the special prerogatives with which Timothy and Titus were invested.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. With what kind of authority did St. Paul invest Timothy and Titus?</p> <p>2. Is there any evidence that they conferred similar power on any other minister, or established similar regulations in any other place?</p> <p>3. What is the testimony quoted from the Epistles to Timothy?</p> <p>4. What is the testimony quoted from the Epistle to Titus?</p> <p>5. In reference to Timothy and Titus, what general remarks are made?</p> <p>6. What is the argument, founded on what is said in the second and third chapters of Revelation, concerning the "angels" of the seven Churches of Asia?</p> <p>7. From the arguments adduced, where was the highest power of Church-government vested during the lives of the apostles and evangelists?</p> | <p>8. Is there any evidence that these high prerogatives were conferred on any other persons?</p> <p>9. What is the inference from this fact?</p> <p>10. Did many apostolic Churches exist, that were not placed under a similar regimen to those of Ephesus and in Crete, under Timothy and Titus?</p> <p>11. What is the inference to be drawn from this fact?</p> <p>12. Where, then, did the apostles deposit the power of Church-government?</p> <p>13. What scriptures prove that this power was deposited in the ordained ministry?</p> <p>14. What two general conclusions are arrived at from the foregoing?</p> |
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CHAPTER VIII.

THE MINISTRY—DIFFERENT ORDERS—ORDINATION OF THE MINISTRY
—ITS CONNECTION WITH THE CHURCHES.

THE Christian Church is evidently an institution not only divine in its origin, but vastly important in its character. As is clear from the Scriptures, it was intended by its sovereign Founder that it should supersede the Mosaic institution, and “break in pieces and consume” all earthly kingdoms. According to the decree of God, it was to be universal in extent and everlasting in duration. Such being its character and importance, we might reasonably suppose that, in the divine arrangement and procedure, it would not only be furnished with an inspired code of moral and religious duty, of faith and practice—a clear exposition of the plan of salvation under the gospel—but also with an intelligible outline of the great and leading features of the organization and polity of the Christian Church itself, so far as necessary to its validity, purity, and success.

I. Among the prominent features connected with the organization of the apostolic Churches, it will strike the careful examiner that the CHRISTIAN MINISTRY occupies a conspicuous place. This ministry was instituted by the great Head and Founder of the Church as the leading instrumentality through which the gospel should be propagated, Churches organized, and the ordinances and discipline duly administered.

In the New Testament a variety of terms are used to designate the office-bearers of the Church. We are not, however, authorized to suppose that each of these terms points to a separate and distinct officer. St. Paul gives the following enumeration: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” Eph. iv. 11. In addition to these, we are informed that the Church was supplied with bishops, elders, and deacons. It is very evident that all these different terms are not intended each to describe a separate and distinct officer. It is manifest that the peculiar work indicated by several of these terms often pertains to the same person,

and *that* person was designated sometimes by one of the terms, and sometimes by another. St. Paul more than once styles the same persons both bishops and elders. The import of the terms themselves will plainly indicate the sense in which they were used, thus:

1. The term "*apostle*" signifies *one sent*; and in this sense it is applicable to every minister *called and sent of God* to preach the gospel, and is evidently, as has already been shown, intended to be perpetuated to "the end of the world."

2. The term "*prophet*" means *one who foretells*; and, in this connection, is applicable to every minister of the gospel, implying that he proclaims the promises of God to the faithful, and his denunciations against the wicked.

3. The term "*bishop*" means *overseer*, or *superintendent*, and applies to every gospel minister as he may have the spiritual oversight of a Church, or of Churches and ministers.

4. The term "*presbyter*," or "*elder*," denotes *one of age or experience*, or, in this connection, *one ordained with ministerial authority* for the governmental control of a Church or Churches.

5. The term "*deacon*" means *one who serves* or *acts for others*, and applies to those ministers who were ordained in special charge of the poor and the sick. That these were not mere laymen, appears not only from the fact of their ordination, and from the additional fact that several of the deacons ordained in the Church at Jerusalem were able and successful preachers, but from the necessary qualifications of this order, as stated by St. Paul.

6. The term "*pastor*" signifies *a shepherd*, and applies to every minister placed in care of a Church.

7. The term "*evangelist*" denotes *a proclaimer of good news*, and applies to every gospel minister, as he may spread the gospel abroad, or get up new Churches.

8. The term "*teacher*" implies *one who instructs*, and pertains to every minister of the gospel, as he may expound the sacred word.

From the foregoing it will be readily perceived that *nearly all* these offices may meet in the same person, or that a person may be authorized to perform *only a small portion* of them. In the New Testament view, all of God's ministers in this wide sense are *apostles*, for they are all called and *sent of God* to preach; they are all *prophets*, for they all authoritatively declare the promises of God to the faithful, and his threatenings against the wicked; and they are all *teachers*, for they all, more or less, explain the gospel system. But they are not all *pastors*, for all have not the care of Churches: they are not all *evangelists*, for

all are not engaged in spreading the gospel in new places, or organizing new Churches; they are not all *deacons*, for all are not ordained to minister to the sick and the poor; they are not all *elders*, for all are not ordained as spiritual rulers of the Church; nor are all *bishops*, for all do not preside over Churches, or over Churches and ministers.

That deacons are the *inferior* order of ministers, and elders, or bishops, the *superior* order, appears from these words of St. Paul: "They that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith." This clearly implies promotion to a higher position in the ministry.

II. As respects the *NATURE* of that government which the office-bearers are warranted in exercising over the Christian Church, it is purely *spiritual*. Christ's kingdom being "not of this world," the rulers of his Church have no authority to inflict pains and penalties by fines, imprisonment, or corporal punishment, like civil governments, but must rely solely on admonition, reproof, and excommunication. It is plainly the duty of the rulers of the Church to advise and counsel with those over whom they exercise spiritual control, and secure, as far as may be, their approval and coöperation; but still these Church-rulers are held responsible to the Head of the Church—"who hath counted them worthy, putting them into the ministry"—as much for the due administration of his ordinances and discipline as for the faithful preaching of his word; and hence they cannot, as faithful stewards, relinquish to the laity this governmental responsibility with which they have been intrusted by the Lord Jesus.

The *constitution and laws* according to which the government and discipline of the Church should be administered, are comprised in the New Testament; and these statutes are not subject to modification, amendment, or repeal. But should the rulers of the Church attempt to "lord it over God's heritage," the remedy of the people against any supposed usurpation or maladministration is in remonstrance, protestation, appeal to a higher ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and finally, when the evil becomes so great that it can only be submitted to by the sacrifice of a good conscience, withdrawal from a corrupt and apostate Church.

ORDINATION OF THE MINISTRY.

We now present it as one of the foundation principles in connection with the ministry of the New Testament Church, that—

Each organized Church should be placed under the pastoral charge of one or more ordained elders or ministers; and other ministers, not in pastoral care of Churches, should be employed as evangelists or missionaries

for the purpose of spreading the gospel, and getting up and organizing new Churches.

Christ "ordained twelve that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." Mark iii. 14.

The apostles, with the solemnities of prayer and the casting of lots, set apart Matthias to fill the vacancy in the apostolate caused by the apostasy of Judas (Acts i.).

The apostles, by prayer and the laying on of hands, consecrated chosen men to the office of deacon (Acts vi.).

Saul and Barnabas, by the solemnities of fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands, were set apart to the special work of a mission to the Gentiles (Acts xiii.).

Timothy was consecrated by the laying on of the hands of St. Paul and of the presbytery (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6).

Timothy and Titus, under the express instructions of St. Paul, ordained elders and deacons, of approved character, in all the Churches in Crete and the regions of Ephesus (1 Tim. iii., v. 22; Titus i. 5.).

From these examples, recorded in the inspired history of the Christian Church, of numerous approved persons being expressly chosen and solemnly ordained to the ministerial office, and in the absence of any intimation that any were allowed to exercise the functions of the sacred office without such approval and ordination, we deduce the inference that an *ordained ministry* is the divinely established instrumentality through which a properly organized Church was to be established and perpetuated, and the ordinances and discipline duly administered.

IV. We next invite attention to the CONNECTION established, according to the New Testament history, between the *ministers* and the *Churches*.

On this point, in modern times, a diversity of sentiment has obtained. Some have contended for the ordination of a *settled pastorate* over all the Churches, whilst others have advocated a *transient itinerancy* as being most in accordance with the apostolic plan.

If we understand the teachings of the New Testament on this subject, the elements of the regular pastorate relation and of the itinerancy were both embodied in the apostolical plan and operations. The one was needed for the government and pastoral charge of organized Churches; the other for the spreading of the gospel and the getting up of new Churches.

The apostles were extraordinary ministers, endued with all the authority of Christ himself in the establishment, organization, and control

of the Churches. In the grand commission under which they acted, they were commanded to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." As yet no Churches existed under the New Testament economy. The world was before them as their parish. Accordingly we find them traveling at large, gaining converts to the new faith, and organizing Churches.

Others, such as Timothy, Titus, and Barnabas, were soon ordained to the ministry, and associated with the apostles as evangelists or missionaries in the great work of extending the influence of the gospel abroad, and organizing Churches in distant lands; hence it is clear that we find in the history of the Church, as recorded in the New Testament, ample authority for an *itinerant* ministry in the propagation of the gospel. This was the grand evangelistic or missionary lever which, under God, "turned the world upside down," and in one century spread the doctrines of the cross commensurate with the Roman Empire.

On the other hand, it is equally clear, from the testimony of New Testament history, that, in all places where the apostles, or the evangelists under them, established and organized Churches, they placed over them regular pastors having the oversight and care thereof. To this important feature in New Testament history we now turn our attention.

In the fourteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we have an account of the course pursued by the apostles in the organization of the Churches. St. Paul and St. Barnabas, according to the record, took an extensive tour in visiting the newly-formed Churches, "confirming the brethren," and setting things in order. They "ordained them elders in every Church" to exercise over these several congregations the pastoral care. Dr. Clarke, in his comment on the twenty-third verse of this chapter says: "They appointed persons, the most experienced and the most advanced in the divine life, to *watch over* and *instruct* the rest." And he adds: "I believe the simple truth to be this, that in ancient times the people chose, by the lifting up of hands, their spiritual pastor; and the rulers of the Church, whether apostles or others, appointed that person to his office by the imposition of hands."

Upon the same passage Mr. Benson remarks: "This custom of ordaining elders in the Churches which he planted Paul invariably observed, in order that the brethren, being united together under the direction of stated teachers and leaders, might increase the more in grace."

As an evidence that such was the general course in all the apostolic Churches, we find St. Paul giving express instructions to Titus as to the course to be pursued in the Churches in Crete, which at that time was

a very populous island, containing, as historians state, about a hundred cities; and yet St. Paul tells Titus to "ordain elders in every city." And he then goes on to describe the character and duties of these elders, in such style as to leave the conclusion inevitable that they were to be the regular pastors and rulers of the Churches. Mr. Benson, in commenting on this passage, remarks as follows: "That is, that thou shouldest perfect what was left unfinished at my departure, or mightest settle the affairs which I had not time to settle myself; and 'ordain elders (pastors or teachers, the same with bishops) in every city' where there are Churches."

Here, then, we have the testimony of Mr. Benson that these "elders" were regular pastors, and that every Church, according to the instructions of St. Paul, was to be thus supplied. Dr. Clarke's comment on the passage is in the following words: "It appears from this that St. Paul did not spend much time in Crete, and that he was obliged to leave it before he had got the Church properly organized. '*Ordain elders in every city*,' that thou mightest appoint persons well instructed in divine things, who should be able to instruct others, and *observe and enforce the discipline of the Church*. It appears that those who are called 'elders' in this place are the same as those termed 'bishops,' verse seventh."

Now, according to Dr. Clarke, St. Paul did not consider a Church "properly organized" till a *regular pastor*, or bishop, was ordained and placed over it as its stated *teacher and ruler*. Perhaps it would be superfluous to give the testimony of any additional commentators on the passages under review; but, lest it might be thought that the views of Benson and Clarke are not in accordance with the general sentiment of learned commentators, we add a few other authorities.

Mr. Burkitt, in his notes on Acts xiv. 23, uses the following language: "Here we have two farther instances of the apostle's care of these new-planted Churches; and the first was, to settle them in *Church-order*, ordaining elders in every Church to be the guides and teachers of the rest." Here it appears, according to Burkitt, that, without a regular pastor ordained over each and every Church, the Churches could not be "settled in Church-order." On Titus i. 5, Mr. Burkitt remarks as follows: "To '*ordain elders in every city*,' such as might *govern*, and *teach*, and administer to God in holy things; wherever a Church is planted, there is an absolute necessity of a settled ministry."

Dr. Macknight gives it as his opinion, in his comment on Titus i. 5, that "elders were to be ordained in every city where the converts were so numerous as to form a Church."

Thomas Scott, in his comment on Acts xiv. 23, says: "These elders were their *stated pastors*, who presided in the worship of God, and preached his word unto them."

We will not stay longer to quote from commentaries on the subject before us. The testimony given from Clarke and Benson, especially as we find the highest authorities in the Episcopalian and Presbyterian ranks coinciding with them in opinion, is sufficient to satisfy us that, without the utmost violence to the text, no other construction than the one we have presented *can* be given to the passages. Indeed, we may say, fearless of successful contradiction, that the great mass of learned commentators agree with Clarke and Benson in asserting that over all the apostolic Churches *regular ruling pastors* were placed; and, till such was the case, they were not considered "properly organized."

Therefore we may conclude that the New Testament history sufficiently demonstrates the following points:

1. That a *regularly ordained ministry* is established.
2. That this ministry comprises, *first*, an *itinerant evangelistic department*, for the spreading of the gospel and the getting up and organizing of new Churches; and, *secondly*, a *regular pastorate relation*, for taking care of the Churches organized.

We will next call attention to the confirmatory evidence on this subject furnished by *the history of the Church in succeeding ages*.

Aside from the Acts of the Apostles, the earliest Church-history which has come down to us is that of Eusebius. This author wrote in the fourth century, and brings down the history of the Church to the Council of Nice, which took place in the year 325. He is the only author who wrote a history of the Church during the centuries immediately succeeding the apostles, whose writings have reached us; consequently all subsequent writers have been mainly dependent on him for their account of the Church during that period. Eusebius is the more valuable as a Church-historian because he quotes extensively from the writings of others, furnishing us in this way with the only extracts now extant from the works of various individuals in reference to the Church in those primitive times. He says himself that he had "collected the materials that had been scattered by his predecessors, and culled, as from some intellectual meadows, the appropriate extracts from ancient authors."

On the points to which we have directed our present inquiry, Eusebius is very clear and satisfactory. He gives, in regular and consecutive order, the names of the bishops of a number of the principal Churches, even from the apostles themselves down to his day, and often specifies

the number of years they respectively served. Among the principal Churches concerning which he is thus specific, may be mentioned that of Rome, of Alexandria, of Ephesus, of Antioch, of Jerusalem, and of Corinth. He proceeds to give an account of the course pursued by many who, after the apostolic age, prosecuted the work of "evangelists," and who, in his own words, "after laying the foundation of the faith in foreign parts, as the particular object of their mission, and after appointing others as shepherds of the flocks, and committing to these the care of those that had been recently introduced, went again to other regions and nations, with the grace and coöperation of God."

Thus it appears that such as acted the part of missionaries or evangelists, after the apostles' day, still adhered to the same plan—they placed pastors over all the organized Churches. We believe it is admitted by all Christian writers of eminence on Church-polity that, from the time the apostles first "ordained elders in the Churches" down the stream of history for the space of three hundred years, there never was a Christian Church, properly organized, over which a regular pastor or pastors did not preside. We may, with safety, go even farther, and affirm that, while there is satisfactory evidence to prove that the general practice, both in the apostolic and succeeding ages, was to place regular ruling pastors over all the organized Churches, there is no evidence to show that there existed a solitary exception to the rule for the space of fifteen hundred years.

But what are we to infer from these facts? *First*. That the Churches were not left to their own government and control, on the plan of Independency. *Secondly*. That neither the *settled* *pastorate* principle nor the *itinerancy* should be adopted, to the exclusion of the other, but that the two should be blended.

One plan by which the elements of these two systems may be advantageously united is that of a *regular itinerancy*, giving to each Church a settled pastorate over it for a limited time, yet subject to a systematic and periodical change. Such is the general economy of Methodism. This system, while it comprehends more extensively than can be done by most Church-organizations the itinerant or evangelistic department, at the same time embraces, to a considerable extent, the settled pastorate relation; thus happily combining the two great gospel elements. It is true, this system, as a general rule, does not recognize a pastorate relation *settled for life*; but it is none the less really a *settled* or *fixed* relation, because the period of its unconditional continuance may be limited. A Church may have a pastorate regularly settled over it for twenty years, although the incumbent of the office may be changed a

dozen times. In this sense the pastorate over a Methodist Church never dies. The moment the pastoral jurisdiction of one minister ceases, that of another begins; so that the Church has always a pastor, and the pastor always a Church.

It must be admitted that the Methodist organization exhibits the evangelistic or missionary feature of the apostolic plan more fully and successfully than can be done by any other system known since the days of Timothy and Titus; and it may truly be doubted whether any other platform of organization approximates so nearly to the apostolic plan in keeping all the Churches regularly supplied with pastors. Among those Churches having no regular and systematic evangelistic or itinerant department, but organized with special reference to a settled pastorate relation, how many hundreds of them are left much of the time without pastors, and how many pastors without Churches! The essence of the pastorate relation depends less upon the question, whether it is a *life-time* or a *periodical* arrangement, than upon the fact as to the constancy and regularity of the supply of a pastor or pastors for each Church, and a Church or field of operation for each minister. If this be the essence of the apostolic plan, then it will follow that this plan is nowhere more fully and successfully realized than in connection with the Methodist organization.

The fact that regular pastors, exercising the power of government and control, were placed over all the apostolic Churches, is sufficient evidence that the government of the Churches was not modeled by the apostles either after the Congregational or the Presbyterian form. The power of government was neither vested in each congregation collectively, nor yet in the pastor and his lay elders; but in the *ordained ministerial elders*.

To what extent these ministerial elders, in whom we have shown the apostles deposited the power of jurisdiction and control over the Churches, may engage and admit the assistance and coöperation of the laity in the management of ecclesiastical affairs, is a question depending much upon considerations of expediency. We may safely conclude that such method should be pursued as will best secure the zealous and efficient aid and influence of the whole Church, and, at the same time, retain in the hands of the ordained ministry that highest power of government and control over the kingdom of Jesus Christ with which the Head of the Church has intrusted them.

Provided the two apostolical elements be retained and efficiently carried out, so as to secure a regular pastorate over the organized Churches, and an ample degree of evangelistic influence be sent abroad

for the spread of the gospel—provided these two grand objects be secured, it may well be left to the dictates of expediency to determine how transient or how permanent shall be the connection between the individual pastor and the flock of his charge. Whether that connection be continued for life, for a long period, or for a shorter period, to be determined by a presbytery, a conference, or a recognized episcopacy, or whether it be limited by a definite, agreed period, these are questions not settled by the New Testament record; and, consequently, each Christian organization may adopt such plan on the subject as they judge to be the best adapted to secure the grand objects of the gospel.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VIII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What is named as one of the prominent features connected with the organization of the Christian Church?</p> <p>2. What Scripture authority is given showing the origin and ordination of the Christian ministry?</p> <p>3. What may be inferred from the fact that none but regularly authorized persons exercised the functions of the ministerial office?</p> <p>4. What diversity of sentiment has prevailed in regard to the connection between the ministry and the Churches?</p> | <p>5. What two important elements on this subject are exhibited in the New Testament?</p> <p>6. What Scripture testimony is adduced showing that a regular pastorate was placed over the organized Churches?</p> <p>7. What two important positions are said to be demonstrated on this subject by the New Testament history?</p> <p>8. What confirmatory evidence is given from Church-history?</p> <p>9. What conclusive inferences are made from the facts presented?</p> |
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CHAPTER IX.

THE CLAIMS OF INDEPENDENCY EXAMINED.

It is assumed by the advocates of Independency in Church-government—

1. That the laity composing a Church have the power of discipline, including the right to receive and exclude members.

2. That they have the right of electing their own pastors.

I. We will examine the proof of the position, that the laity have the power of discipline, and the right of receiving and excluding members.

1. The first proof of this position offered by the advocates of Independency, is founded upon the following scripture:

“Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” Matt. xviii. 15–17.

It is admitted on all hands, that our Lord did not set up and organize the Christian Church by his personal agency, but that he committed this work to his inspired apostles; hence the Christian Church dates its origin from the day of Pentecost, when the apostles were “endued with power from on high.” Bearing in mind this admitted fact, it will readily be perceived how futile must be the attempt to prove, by the scripture adduced, that the Church-government is vested in the laity.

(1) The attempt is made to found an argument for Independency in the government of the Christian Church upon a regulation made, not in reference to that Church, but to a state of things previous to its existence. As the only Church or congregation of worshipers with which these disciples were now connected was that of the Jewish temple or synagogue, it was to *that* Church, and not to the Christian Church, that the Saviour referred. Surely it cannot be presumed that

he undertook to innovate upon the Jewish polity in reference to the synagogue service! And it is well known that these synagogues were governed by a select court of rulers, or elders, and not by the whole congregation on the principles of Independency. To attempt thus, as has been done, to prove Independency by this instruction of our Lord, given before the Christian Church had an existence, and having no reference whatever to its polity, is palpably illogical. As well might we plead that when our Saviour sent forth his apostles, saying, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats"—as well might we contend that our Lord was thus prescribing the law of the Church, regulating the outfit of missionaries for all subsequent ages.

(2) The argument here postulated for Independency fails, because it substitutes a general direction relating to individual behavior for an ecclesiastical law for the government of the Christian Church. The scripture under review contains a salutary precept for regulating the deportment of the disciples in their association with each other and with their Jewish brethren, but not one word as to the polity of the Christian Church, which was not to be organized till after Pentecost. There is no intimation here given as to the form according to which the Christian Church should proceed in the trial and expulsion of an unruly member. Shall it be done through the medium of appropriate officers? and, if so, how are they to be chosen? and by what form inducted into office? by what laws is the case to be tried? and who shall interpret those laws? Or is the whole Church, as a collective body, to be prosecutor, advocate, judge, jury, and every thing else? Here we find not one word in reference to any of these important particulars; and the reason is obvious. Our Lord was not prescribing a code of laws or form of government for the Christian organization which the apostles were to erect after his departure. He was simply instructing his disciples in reference to their behavior in their intercourse and fellowship with each other as individuals. So far as his instructions embodied *principles* of behavior concerning Christian fellowship, they would apply, of course, after the organization of the gospel Church as well as before; but by no legitimate mode of interpretation can they shed any light as to the form of ecclesiastical polity.

"If thy brother trespass against thee," said our Saviour. Hence it is a private, personal offense, to which he refers, therefore take private means to reclaim him; but if these fail, "then tell it unto the Church"—that is, inform the Church *through her rulers*. For surely our Saviour would not encourage his disciples to ignore or set at naught the estab-

lished order of the synagogue; on the contrary, he encouraged submission to existing authorities, saying, "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." Matt. xxiii. 2, 3. But when the Church has thus, through her rulers, been informed of the sin of the offender, there is not one word here as to the form of the investigation. Was it before the whole Church, or before their stated rulers? On this question our Saviour is silent. But that the matter was adjudicated, not by the whole Church, but by the "rulers of the synagogue," cannot be denied.

Our Saviour proceeds: "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican"—that is, after the Church has finished its proceedings, whatever they may have been, and failed to reclaim the offender, withdraw, as individual Christians, your fellowship from him.

2. The effort has also been made to prove that the power of discipline, with the right to receive and exclude members, is vested in the laity, by appealing to the testimony of St. Paul. The following passages have been relied on for this purpose:

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." 2 Thess. iii. 6. "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses, contrary to doctrines which ye have learned, and avoid them." Rom. xvi. 17.

These passages only instruct Christians in reference to their deportment, as individuals, toward disorderly members—that is, they are admonished to avoid associating with disorderly persons; to shun their society; to come not under their influence; to be not contaminated by their example; to give them no countenance; not to "bid them God speed" in their sinful course.

3. Again: To show that the power of discipline is in the laity, strong reliance has been placed on the following text:

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump." 1 Cor. v. 7.

If, by "purging out the old leaven," the apostle means that the pestiferous member is to be expelled, he only expresses the general truth, that discipline should be so maintained as to preserve the body of the Church in a sound and healthy condition, free from the contagious influence of immorality; but as to the form or mode of procedure in the carrying out of that discipline, he utters not a word. The Church at Corinth, at that time, was composed of private members, together with ministers, officers, and rulers. Already parties had ranged themselves

under their respective leaders, clearly showing the existence of inequality among the people in the management of Church affairs. In this same Epistle, the apostle mentions the fact that these officers, rulers, or leaders, existed among them by divine appointment. His words are: "*God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*" 1 Cor. xii. 28.

Now, we demand, what right have we to infer that the apostle intended by the general exhortation to the Corinthians, "Purge out the old leaven," to establish a platform of Independency in Church-government? In this same letter he refers to an existing order of government, with officers of various grades and powers, and *that* under the appointment of God. These officers originated, not in the popular election of the Church, for the apostle declares, "*God hath set some in the Church,*" referring the arrangement, not to voluntary Church-action, but to divine control. The apostle then proceeds in his enumeration expressly to mention "governments," clearly implying that the power of government had been placed in individuals, and was not deposited in the collective body according to Independency.

From the exhortation, "Purge out the old leaven," we can see no more ground for inferring Independency than any other form of Church-government. The exhortation was addressed to the ministers and officers of the Corinthian Church as much as to the laity. It only enjoins upon all—upon ministers, officers, and private members—the duty of maintaining the purity of the Church by wholesome discipline; but in what form that discipline is to be administered—whether according to Independency, Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, or any other type of ecclesiastical rule—we must go elsewhere to learn.

II. The next question to be considered is, THE APPOINTMENT OF PASTORS TO THE CHURCHES.

Independency claims that *each particular Church has the right to elect its own pastor.*

In attempting to sustain this position, we might reasonably infer, judging *a priori*, that the abettors of Independency would either adduce a plain example, showing that such was the practice of the Christian Church under the apostolic administration, or that they would show an express precept to that effect. We cannot see how any thing short of one or the other of these methods of proof can avail for the purpose in hand; but we think it will appear in the sequel that they have not attempted either.

1. The first resort of Independency to prove the right of each Church

to elect its own pastor, is to what is said in the first chapter of The Acts in reference to the appointment of Matthias to fill the vacancy in the apostolate caused by the apostasy of Judas.

The total irrelevancy of the case here adduced to the point in hand, may be seen at a glance. Observe, the point to be proved is, that the body of members composing any Christian Church have the right to choose their own pastor. That this position cannot be established by reference to the case of Matthias, will appear from the following facts.

(1) Matthias was not chosen as *pastor of a Christian Church*.

(2) He was not chosen by the *members constituting a particular Christian Church*.

(3) He was not elected by *the votes of the disciples present, but by lot, after prayer for the divine direction*.

(4) In that prayer, the disciples repudiated the position that the prerogative of choosing in the case was vested in *them*. They prayed, saying, "Show whether of these two *thou hast chosen*"—thus proving that they recognized *no right of choice as existing in them*.

(5) This appointment of Matthias transpired, not only *previous to the organization of the Christian Church*, but before the apostles had been "endued with power from on high" for the execution of that work. Of course it can prove nothing as to the method of appointing the pastors of Christian Churches.

(6) There is no evidence that Matthias *ever did serve* as the pastor of a particular Christian Church.

(7) The disciples, in the case in hand, did not act of their own accord, but under the instruction of Peter, simply *yielding to his control*.

With these seven facts before us, no one of which can be disputed, and the admission of any one of which demonstrates the irrelevancy of the case of Matthias as proof of the point in question, we may be allowed to dismiss this first argument to establish the right of the laity to choose their own pastor. The attempt to found Independency upon the case of Matthias is a palpable failure.

2. Next. The attempt is made to prove the right of each Church to select its own pastor from the choosing of the "seven deacons," as recorded in the sixth chapter of The Acts.

This case comes nearer being applicable to the point in hand than the former, in *one* particular, and in *that only*—that is, it is not a case occurring anterior to the organization of the Christian Church. But that it as signally fails to prove that each Church has the right to choose its own pastor, is easily shown.

In addition to the remarks made on this subject in a preceding chap-

ter, we think it only necessary to fix the attention upon the following particulars:

(1) The disciples only did *as they were commanded by the apostles*. They did not proceed as though they considered themselves vested with the prerogative of doing as they pleased in the matter.

(2) The right of *appointment* was evidently not in the disciples, nor did they attempt to exercise it. It existed in and was exercised by the *apostles*.

(3) But, after all, what is fatal to the case as proof of the point in hand—*these deacons were not appointed as pastors of Churches*.

Wonderful logic! The argument of Independency is this: the apostles, whose right it was to "ordain elders in every city," and to organize all the Churches, giving to each Church the requisite officers, directed the Church at Jerusalem to select seven men, having specific qualifications, to superintend the collection and disbursement of the poor-fund of the Church; *therefore each Christian Church everywhere has the right to choose its own pastor!*

3. But to prove the position in question, Independency has resorted to the celebrated council at Jerusalem, whose history we have in the fifteenth chapter of The Acts.

Referring to what we have already said upon this subject in a former chapter, as in itself ample proof that nothing can be derived from this source in support of Independency, we need here add but little.

The facts, so far as they bear on the case, are briefly these: The Church at Antioch appealed to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for the settlement of a question relating to Church-communion: the apostles and elders met in council, and, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, settled the question; but, *because* the laity were present and signified their approval—were "pleased" with the conclusion arrived at—*therefore* it is inferred that the laity, in every Christian Church, have the right to choose their own pastor.

The fallacy of the argument which would prove the point in hand, by the case referred to, may easily be shown.

(1) The question was not settled by "the whole Church," but by the "apostles and elders." "The whole Church" only assented to it, or were "pleased" with it.

(2) If the appeal had been made to "the whole Church," and "the whole Church" had settled the question in Church-capacity on the Congregational plan, and sent the Epistle officially as *their* Church-action, it could not avail the weight of a feather as a proof of the point in hand. It had no relation whatever to the question of selecting Church-pastors.

The argument for Independency, as founded on the action of this council, in logical form, is in substance as follows :

"The whole Church" at Jerusalem was once consulted in reference to *one matter*, therefore "the whole Church" in every place has the right to decide *another matter*, of an entirely different nature. Because "the whole Church" at Jerusalem approved or sanctioned the decision of the apostles and elders, that circumcision is not an essential prerequisite to communion, *therefore* every Church in every place, independently of "apostles and elders," may select its own pastor. We consider the reasoning that would find a ground for Independency in the case before us, too inconsequential to justify any farther notice.

4. The Christian Churches sometimes gave *letters of commendation* as an introductory passport to certain ministers when going among strangers.

This fact has been seized upon as proof that those Churches had the right to elect their own pastors. If the advocates of Independency can see any force in the argument they here predicate, we must say they can see what, to our perception, is undiscernible. Why these *letters* might not be as useful to a minister in connection with *one* as *another* mode of Church-government, is quite beyond our ken. If there could be any difference in the value of such *letters*, it would be likely to be in favor of those ministers who had their appointment from some other source than the collective body of the Church. If their appointment, as ministers, is from "the whole Church," they already possess all the indorsement the Church is able to impart; but if their appointment is from a bishop, a presbytery, a council, or a conference, a letter from a Church acquainted with their character and deportment may, under some circumstances, be very useful and satisfactory.

5. An effort has been made to found an argument on this question upon the fact that Christians are exhorted to "try the spirits," and to watch against the wiles of false prophets and false teachers.

Such characters they are exhorted to detect, to shun their influence, and not to "bid them Godspeed." This is all wholesome advice, and it seems to us just as necessary under one method of inducting ministers into office as another. Why can such advice be more needed or useful when each Church selects its own pastor than when they are otherwise supplied? Is it to be supposed that ministers elected by their respective Churches are less trustworthy or more to be suspected on that account? By whatever plan ministers may be appointed, unworthy persons cannot be kept from sometimes intruding into sacred places; and, while this is the case, it will continue to be the duty of all—both ministers and laity

—to “try the spirits,” and to judge the tree by its fruit. But how the fact that it is the duty of all Churches and of all Christians to guard against the seductive wiles of false teachers, and the baneful influence of false doctrine—how this fact can demonstrate that the right exists in each Church to select its own pastor, is beyond our capacity to perceive. Mark, the duty of thus “trying the spirits,” and of not receiving a false teacher “into our house,” or “bidding him Godspeed,” is not enjoined upon Churches, as such, more than upon individuals, as such. If, then, it proves that each Church has the right to select its own pastor, it must also prove that each individual possesses that right; and this would subvert all Church-organization, and lead directly to anarchy and confusion. To what absurd consequences must we be led, when we plant ourselves upon an unsound position!

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IX.

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| QUESTION 1. What two positions of Independence are here considered? | 5. What is the first argument founded upon, and how is it answered? |
| 2. What is the first proof of the first position, and how is it shown to be insufficient? | 6. Upon what is the second argument founded, and how is it answered? |
| 3. Upon what other scriptures are arguments founded for this position, and how are they answered? | 7. The third argument, and how answered? |
| 4. What is the second position of Independence here discussed? | 8. What is the fourth argument, and how answered? |
| | 9. What is the fifth argument, and how is it answered? |

CHAPTER X.

WRITTEN CREEDS, DISCIPLINES, AND CONFESSIONS OF FAITH.

It has been the practice of the Christian Church in all ages to adopt written symbols, creeds, forms of discipline, or confessions of faith, setting forth an outline of the belief and practice of her communicants. There have not been wanting, however, especially in modern times, persons, calling themselves Christians, who have repudiated and denounced all such written formulas as unauthorized, sinful, and pernicious. A brief chapter on this subject is rendered necessary, more by the zeal and pertinacity with which creeds and confessions of faith have been opposed than by any conviction that the arguments by which that opposition has been maintained possess in themselves much force, or even plausibility.

We are persuaded that the prejudice against creeds, in the abstract, has generally arisen from a superficial examination of the subject and an erroneous conception of the nature and design of creeds. This prejudice has no doubt been greatly aggravated by the *abuse* of creeds, of which the history of the Church furnishes us some painful examples and illustrations. But as it is admitted that the best things in the world may be abused or perverted, and that the *abuse* can furnish no good reason against the proper *use* of any thing whatever, it necessarily follows that it is palpably illogical to argue against the *use* of creeds from their *abuse*.

For an uninspired man or set of men to compose a creed, and attempt to enforce it upon others, whether it accords with their belief as to the teachings of the word of God or not, is certainly a usurpation. This would be "lording it over God's heritage," which the Bible condemns. It would be a renunciation of that great and hallowed principle—that "the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants." It would be an unwarranted and flagrant intrusion upon that *liberty of conscience* everywhere recognized in Scripture.

I. The PROPRIETY and UTILITY of Church-creeds, disciplines, or confessions of faith. may be shown from the following considerations:

1. It will not be disputed that *the New Testament guarantees to every Christian the right, and enjoins upon him the duty, of "searching the Scriptures," and judging for himself what they teach.*

If this proposition be true, it necessarily follows that every one possesses also the right to communicate to others an abstract or summary of his belief in reference to *what* the Scriptures teach; and if he may make such communication at all, he may print it in a book and spread it before the world, so that all men may see and know the "reascr. of the hope that is in him." The book thus published is the author's *creed*, or an outline of his belief; and that he had the right thus to embody and set forth his faith no one can dispute, provided only that he do not attempt to enforce it upon others.

Now, if an individual Christian may thus adopt, write out, and publish his own creed, why not a Church or an association of Christians? And if they may thus adopt and publish their creed, what harm can there be in subscribing to such a creed, and voluntarily engaging to conform to and support the same? Were it the fact that an individual Christian, or a denomination of Christians, were endeavoring to coerce subscription to articles of faith, or obedience to a form of discipline, upon persons who had not voluntarily adopted those articles, and promised conformity to those rules of discipline, the case would be materially altered. Such a procedure would be spiritual tyranny of the most despicable character. But where, we ask, is this the case? where has it ever been the case among Protestants? In all these organizations none are required to become members, except on the voluntary principle. If we frame an outline of our faith and rules of discipline, all of which we believe to be "taught of God, even in his written word," and if these articles and rules are enforced upon none but such as of their own free will and accord adopt them, where is any infringement of liberty of conscience? where is any element of spiritual tyranny? While the voluntary principle, both in uniting with and withdrawing from the Church, is sacredly preserved, neither liberty of conscience can be trampled down, nor the reign of spiritual despotism inaugurated; hence we think it clear that all Christians and all Churches are fully authorized to embody their creed or discipline in a book, thus exhibiting an outline-draft of those fundamental principles which they believe to be taught in God's word.

2. Next, it may easily be shown that there must be an agreement among those united in Church association, as to the fundamentals of faith, and the general principles and form of discipline, or Christian union, harmony, and fellowship, and the great ends of Church organi

zation, cannot be secured. Without this agreement, how can the regular and orderly *public worship* of God be maintained? how can the *word* of God and the *sacraments* and *discipline* of the Church be duly and harmoniously administered?

(1) A creed or discipline is necessary for the orderly conducting of the *public worship* of God.

It is a common-sense position that a creed, or formula of discipline, may be just as authoritative and binding, and consequently as potent for good or evil, when only understood and *orally* sanctioned, as when *written*; therefore it would be entirely yielding the point in dispute for the no-creed party to say: "We will adopt no written creed, but we will in some way come to a *verbal* understanding as to the essential articles of faith and rules of order." Is it not as plain as any thing can be that the essential element of a creed consists not in the form or shape in which it is expressed, but in its subject-matter or substance? If you promise to pay your friend a given amount, is that promise any the less real or binding because it was not *written*, but only *verbal*? Upon the same principle, is not a *creed* or *rule* as really such, and as authoritative, when it has been explained and *agreed to*, as though *written down* and formally adopted? The unlawfulness of the creed, if any such quality there be, consists not in the fact that it has been *written*, but that it has been expressed in *uninspired language*, and *adopted*. Surely no sane person could even dream that there is any spiritual virus in the mere ink, paper, or materials of a book, rendering that sinful and pernicious, if reduced to a written form, which would be perfectly right and harmless if only uttered by the voice, and verbally adopted? If it be unlawful to write an article of faith or a rule of discipline in a book, and for a Church to adopt it in that form, how can it be lawful for the same Church to adopt the same article and rule when verbally expressed? The position that there is so essential a difference between the *written* and *verbal* form of expressing the same thing, that the one is *right* while the other is *sinful*, is too puerile to be seriously discussed. Hence it follows that the opposers of all human creeds, to render their practice consistent with their theory, must be able to conduct the public worship of God, and all the services, ordinances, and discipline of the Church, in a decent, orderly, and edifying manner, independent of any preëgreement whatever on the subject.

Now, let us contemplate how great would be the confusion resulting from an attempt practically to carry out this principle. In the same congregation, where there is no preërrangement or understanding tending to a different result, we may suppose persons collected together, rep-

representing every shade of belief among the diversified orders throughout the Christian world.

Public worship is to be attended to; but how shall it be conducted? Some might be in favor of a liturgy, while others would prefer the extemporaneous plan. How is the matter to be settled, when each is persuaded that he gets his views from the Bible? It is obvious there must be a general agreement on the question before they can proceed harmoniously; but by whatever form or process this agreement is reached—whether by vote of the whole society or otherwise—that agreement, so far as it extends, is virtually the adoption of a creed.

If we come to the question of Church-music, there might be still greater diversity of sentiment. Some might think the deep-toned organ an essential appendage to this service; others might oppose this, but contend for a well-trained choir; while others might prefer only the human voice, but strenuously object to the singing of any thing but Rouse's version of the Psalms; others would plead for congregational singing, including hymns and spiritual songs, conscientiously opposing all such appurtenances as instrumental music or choir-singing, as not authorized by the New Testament; but, last of all, some, brought up under Quaker influence, might oppose all music but what is *silent*, urging the apostolic precept, "Make melody in your heart to the Lord." How, we ask, is all this discord to be harmonized? Each professes to be guided by the Scriptures. There must, of course, be some agreement on the subject, but however that may be brought about, it will be in effect the adoption of a creed.

(2) Without some prearrangement, how is the regular *preaching of the word* to be secured?

Some might contend that the Christian ministry is not a distinct order, but that the right to preach and to administer the sacraments pertains as much to one person as to another, and that no appointment or consecration, in any form, is requisite; others might think that these prerogatives and duties pertain to particular persons selected and appointed by vote of the Church without any formal ordination; while others might hold that no man ought to administer the sacraments until he has been ordained by "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery;" and others still might contend that ordination by a bishop, in a regular line of succession from the apostles, is essential to a valid ministry and valid sacraments.

Now, as all these conflicting sentiments are strenuously maintained by persons of different denominations, all professing to be governed by the New Testament, how are these questions to be regulated without

some agreed plan to settle the interpretation of the Scriptures in reference to the points in hand? And if the matter be thus settled, would not that settlement be the adoption of a creed?

If it be said that when any such matter comes before the Church, they will decide it by vote—if this position be taken, then we reply, What if some object to that mode of decision as not in accordance with the New Testament? Then if a vote be proposed to settle *that* dispute, it *too* might be objected to on a similar ground; and so on they might proceed in an endless series of propositions to vote, and objections.

But if the ground be taken that when once it has been decided by vote what the New Testament does teach on a given point, then it is settled, and ought not to be disturbed by farther agitation, and that would be the same as the adoption of a creed or rule of discipline; and it might as well be written in a book, and preserved in permanent form, subject to the examination of all, as to be recorded by the secretary in the Minutes of Church-proceedings.

If it be said that any such decision is only applicable to the case then in hand, and is no rule for the control of future action, then it follows that it is a creed or rule of human device and adoption. It is none the less a creed or rule for the time being, and in application to the case in hand, because it is limited to that particular time and case. All that can be gained by this maneuvering is, that, instead of having one established creed or rule alike applicable to all similar cases, a new creed or rule must be adopted in every new case and by every new vote.

The truth is, there must be agreement as to the order and method of proceeding, or, in other words, as to what are the teachings of the New Testament on the subject, or there can be no order or government whatever. If government exists, it must be administered. If it be administered, it must be administered by some person or persons, according to some rule and in some form; and those administrators must be recognized by the parties governed as the law-interpreting and the law-administering power, according to the New Testament; and whenever, and by whatever form, whether written or oral, that recognition is made, a creed or Church-rule, whether we admit it or not, is adopted. And who cannot see that it is better to have an established rule for all similar cases, than to adopt a new rule, or be compelled to readopt an old one with every new case?

(3) Again, look at the inconvenience and confusion that must ensue from the no-creed principle, were the attempt made to carry it out in reference to the *ordinances*.

Suppose there were several applicants knocking at the door for baptism and admission for Church-membership. Each has examined the New Testament for himself, but one is satisfied that the ordinance should be administered by *pouring*, another can only be satisfied with *sprinkling*, another is sure there is no baptism but *immersion*, another still deems all wrong but himself—he reads, and understands his New Testament to teach that he must be dipped *three times*, first “in the name of the *Father*,” then “in the name of the *Son*,” and then “in the name of the *Holy Ghost*.”

Now, how is this matter to be settled? It is a case of importance, and one *too* that, again and again, has come up in the history of the no-creed party. We reply, it cannot be settled at all, except by a renunciation of the principles of that party. The two great principles of which they boast are: *first*, “no human creed;” *secondly*, “liberty of conscience to all.” How beautifully are these hallowed principles exhibited in their dealings with these candidates for baptism and Church-membership! Do they admit them to baptism in the form which alone can satisfy the conscience of the candidate? Far from it. The honest candidate, at the very threshold of this no-creed organization, learns that all he has heard about “*the New Testament alone*,” and “*every one his own interpreter*,” was but empty parade. According to the history of this matter, there is no baptism allowed to the candidate, unless he will be immersed. The poor applicant will see now that he has been deceived. He finds that *liberty of conscience* means not *his* conscience, but that of *the administrator*—that is, he may read the New Testament, and be governed by *it alone*, till he seeks admission into a no-creed Church; but that very moment he meets a demonstration that the law with this party is not the *New Testament alone* (allowing each to be his own interpreter), but the New Testament as *they, the no-creed party, interpret it*. Here is a faithful picture of the practical workings of the system.

The no-creed party generally adopt the principle that there is *no baptism but immersion*; hence they allow baptism in no other form, nor will they admit to fellowship, as a member in their communion, any unimmersed person. Though he be as pious as John Fletcher, and though John Wesley or John Knox may have baptized him, by pouring or sprinkling, on his profession of faith, still, as he has not been governed by the New Testament as *they, the no-creed party, see proper to interpret it*, they say to him: “Stand back, ‘we are holier than thou.’ Measure yourself on our Procrustean bedstead, and be cut off or stretched till you fit it, and *then*, but not *till then*, you can enter our

inclosure as a member." If this be not the adoption, practically, of a creed or discipline of the most rigid, narrow, exclusive, and intolerant kind, let some one show us the reason why!

(4) Once more, look at the difficulty that must arise in the operation of the no-creed principle in reference to *the observance of the Sabbath and of the Lord's-supper*.

Some may contend for keeping the "Lord's-day," and others may argue that *Saturday* should be kept as the Sabbath. As to the "Lord's-supper," some may advocate its administration on every "Lord's-day;" some may think the New Testament leaves the question unsettled, and that once a month is sufficient; some may contend that it should always be attended to in the evening, after our Lord's example; others may think, as there is no express precept, the morning may be a suitable time for the Supper. A great many such questions may arise, out of which confusion must result; according to the maxim, no rule but the New Testament. But if any agreement or understanding be arrived at that any rule is to be observed beyond what is written in the New Testament, that very moment the principle of the party is given up, and a creed is virtually adopted. It matters not whether *one* rule or *five hundred* be adopted, or whether they be *written* or *unwritten*, the principle is the same, and, in spite of prejudice and of every thing else, the logical consequences must be the same.

(5) Similar difficulties would arise upon the no-creed plan in all matters of *Church-discipline*. This has been sorely felt by the party. Instances are known to have occurred in which one Church has tried and expelled a minister, and a neighboring Church of the same no-creed party has taken up and acted on the same case, and acquitted the accused. Thus the minister stood on the records of one Church as expelled, and on the records of a neighboring Church of the same faith and order as a minister in good standing. Where there is no agreed basis of organization and government, or where (as St. Paul says it is with the heathen) all "are a law unto themselves," such instances of disorder are the inevitable result.

II. OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

1. Those who oppose written creeds urge it against them that *the adoption of them implies a lack of proper respect for and appreciation of the word of God, and is a substitution of human creeds for the Scriptures*.

In reply to this objection, we remark that it rests entirely on an erroneous basis. We know full well that the no-creed party have ostentatiously assumed to be, *par excellence*, the *New Testament Church*. "The book! the book!" they exclaim, "*we are governed by 'the book.'*"

while the *sects* are governed by human creeds, confessions of faith, and disciplines. While the *sects* are constituted on articles and rules of their own devising, *we*, the Christian Church, are constituted on *the New Testament alone.*"

One might infer from the assumptions thus exhibited that these opponents of creeds were the only class of Christians who profess to be governed by the Scriptures, or even to look upon the inspired volume as the great constitutional chart and authoritative standard of the Church, whether for faith or practice. But how different is this from the facts in the case! We know of no Protestant Church, claiming to be Christian, that does not revere the Bible as the only infallible standard in reference to religion.

One article of the Methodist creed declares: "The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." This is but a sample of the profession of all Protestant denominations in reference to their faith in the Scriptures. Is this substituting a human creed for the New Testament? Does this resemble exalting a creed, or human form of discipline, above the Scriptures? Rather, is it not, in the most emphatic language, recognizing God's word as the supreme, the *only*, authoritative, and infallible standard, both in reference to faith and practice?

The correct idea of a creed is, not that it is intended as a substitute for God's book, or something superior, or even equal to it, but merely that it is a brief and plain abstract or summary of the most important doctrines and duties which the denomination setting it forth believe to be plainly taught in the Holy Scriptures. And it is *because* they believe that these doctrines and duties are thus taught in God's word that they have subscribed to them, and promised adherence to the same while they continue members of that denomination, and their belief in those things remains unchanged. Thus any one uniting with that Church is not supposed to subscribe to its creed *because* he has united with the Church, but to have united with the Church *because* he already believes in its creed. Being a member does not cause his belief in the creed, but his belief in the creed causes him to become a member.

He who reads the Bible, and thinks for himself, must have his belief in reference to the fundamental doctrines and important duties of Christianity. If he keeps this belief to himself, it is his *mental* creed; if he tells it to others, it is his *spoken* creed; if he writes it in a book, it is his *written* creed. Does any suppose that because John Knox, John

Wesley, Andrew Fuller, Alexander Campbell, and others, have each and all of them derived a creed, as best as they could, from God's inspired book, and published it to the world, that in that publication they have shown any disrespect to the Scriptures? or that they intended to substitute their printed belief for the Scriptures? or that they considered the Bible an imperfect standard of faith, and had set forth a better? No one can dream a conclusion so silly. Why, then, should it be thought that because a denomination or collection of Christians have done the very same thing—published in a book called their Creed what they honestly believe the Bible to teach—they should be charged with the sin of having attempted to substitute a code of their own devising for the Scriptures of infallible truth? In all the vast range of inconsequent reasoning, absurd conclusions, and groundless allegations, it would be difficult to find any thing to excel this attempt to fasten upon all written creeds the sin of aiming to be a substitute for the inspired Scriptures.

Indeed, it requires but little reflection to perceive that the objection here urged against written creeds would apply with equal force against all preaching and the publication of all religious books. Why, it might just as well be asked, instead of all this preaching, and writing, and printing, do we not simply have the Scriptures read to the congregations, and no religious book but the Bible printed? for to preach on religion, except in Bible phrase, is attempting to substitute for the Scriptures something of our own. Who does not see the absurdity to which the position leads?

2. But it is argued that the adoption of a creed is useless, unless it expresses Bible truth in a *better form* than the inspired language has expressed it; and to presume that the creed can do this is to assume that *the creed-makers are wiser than inspiration*.

One of the main designs of a written creed is to furnish all concerned with a brief outline of the belief of the denominations as to the teachings of the Bible. It is a fact which none will dispute that, in reference to the teachings of the Scriptures on many important subjects, there is great diversity of sentiment among professed Christians; hence it follows that for a denomination simply to announce to the world that they believe the Bible, would be, as to the point in hand, perfectly evasive and unsatisfactory. It would prove that they were neither atheists nor deists, but would scarcely do more. Whether they are Antinomians, Calvinists, Arminians, Pelagians, Socinians, Universalists, German Rationalists, or what, among all the conflicting beliefs of those who profess to believe the Bible, may be their distinctive tenets, no one could

tell. If all believers in the Bible explained it alike, the case would be different; but while the multitudinous classes of errorists all claim to take their faith from the Bible, something tangible, brief, clear, and unambiguous, such as a creed may supply, is indispensable to show to the world what the denomination understand the Bible to teach.

This same no-creed party are just as ready as others to explain, in private conversation or public sermons, all the peculiar angles of their distinctive belief. Why not print it in a book, and call it their creed? Or if the term *creed* is so offensive, then call it their *sense* of what the Scriptures teach? If merely explaining our belief in reference to what the Scriptures teach does not imply that we consider ourselves wiser than inspiration, neither should printing that explanation in a book, and calling it a creed, be so construed.

Again, a *written* creed furnishes a much fairer ordeal for comparing our doctrines with Scripture, and thus testing their correctness, than can be had if we decline committing our views to writing. If we doubt the correctness of our faith, and fear it will not bear rigid criticism, and yet wish to keep it in countenance and out of the crucible as much as possible, it may be a successful policy to acknowledge no written creed. Words merely *spoken* are easily forgotten, liable to be misunderstood or misrepresented, and are not so readily brought to a strict and critical analysis; but when recorded in a book, they may be closely scanned and criticised, and, if erroneous or absurd, their imperfections may be readily detected and exposed.

Again, creeds may be necessary and useful, without implying that those who make them consider them superior to the Scriptures. The Bible is a very comprehensive book, embracing an extensive range on a great variety of subjects. It embodies a fund of instruction on themes the most important and sublime, and in some instances profoundly mysterious. That portions of its contents are "hard to be understood" is no disparagement, but rather adds dignity and grandeur to that inimitable volume. Of course it must be expected that men will differ in opinion in reference to the interpretation of the Scriptures.

But there is much less diversity of sentiment in reference to the meaning of a creed. For illustration, the no-creed party have very generally adopted an article (whether *oral* or *written* is not material so far as principle is concerned) declaring, "There is no baptism but immersion." Now, it is clear there can be no controversy as to the meaning of this article; but it is equally certain that there is controversy in reference to what the Scriptures teach on the subject. But does it therefore follow that the framers of that article have excelled the

inspired writers? The opponents of creeds surely will not answer this question in the affirmative, but, unless they do, they relinquish the principle of the objection under consideration.

Again, the Bible only gives an outline of Church affairs, leaving much of the detail to be carried out by the Churches, as expediency and circumstances may dictate. These details of organization and government, though in themselves of comparatively minor importance, and though the particular form in which they are adopted is of small consequence, yet such is their nature that attention to them, in some shape, is indispensable to Church order and decorum. For illustration, the Bible enjoins administration of Church discipline and ordinances, but does not specify the precise form in which officers are to be selected for this work; if by the whole Church, whether by *viva voce* vote, by the lifting up of hands, or by ballot, is not declared; nor does the Bible determine the order of administering the Lord's-supper, whether it shall be administered once a month, every week, or every day; nor is the precise order specified in which the public worship is to be conducted, whether reading the Scriptures, singing, prayer, and preaching, are all to be included as parts of the service, and, if so, in what order they are to succeed each other; these, and numerous other details, though not specifically settled in Scripture, are all necessary to be understood and agreed upon in a well ordered Church. But whether these details be settled by a mere verbal understanding preserved in the memory, or by vote of a Church-meeting recorded by a secretary, or by a record printed in a book and called a creed, *these* are mere circumstances which cannot affect the principle involved. Whatever be the form which the proceeding may assume, it proves that there are rules and regulations which Churches may, and *must*, adopt beyond what is written in the New Testament, without claiming a wisdom superior to that of the inspired apostles; and of course the objection is seen to be untenable and fallacious.

Several other objections have been made against creeds, but they are all easily shown to be futile.

3. Creeds are opposed on the ground that there is *no express Bible command authorizing them*. If it be wrong to make, or to adopt, a creed because there is no express Bible command for it, then it is wrong to write and publish a religious book. The one is as destitute of an express command as the other.

If it be said that the propriety of publishing religious books is established by all such general precepts as require us to do all the good we can—if the shift be made to this position, then the objection to creeds

founded on the absence of any express command is relinquished; for if the right to publish a book can rest on *inferential* Bible basis, so may the authority for creeds.

4. Creeds are opposed on the ground that they are productive of *heresies* and *schisms*.

This has often been asserted, but never has been and never can be proved. That creeds should necessarily be productive of heresy or schism, is a position not only unsustained by evidence, but in itself unphilosophical. It confounds the distinction between cause and effect, or rather puts the one for the other. Creeds do not produce diversity of sentiment, but diversity of sentiment produces creeds. If all were agreed *what* the Scriptures teach, there would be no necessity for human creeds; they could not originate. Heresies in the Church arose first, and creeds were framed and adopted to detect, expose, and check those heresies; and that they have been efficient instruments in the accomplishment of this work, the history of the Church has clearly evinced.

Creeds were first called symbols, because they were viewed as signs, marks, or notes, of profession at baptism. The oldest of these is styled "The Apostles' Creed," because it was supposed to have originated at, or near, the apostles' day, if not to be in part derived from them. This noble symbol of Christian faith, originating at so early a date, and sounding on through all succeeding ages from the lips of the millions of God's people, has done more for the prevention and suppression of heresy and schism, and for the promotion of Christian unity and concord, than all that has ever been uttered and written against creeds. Indeed, the legitimate tendency of creeds is directly the reverse of what the objection supposes.

The Nicene Creed, in the fourth century, was framed for the suppression of the Arian heresy. About the close of the same century an addition was made to the creed, condemning the heresy of Macedonius, and affirming the divinity of the Holy Ghost; and at the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, in the middle of the fifth century, by other additions to the creed, the heresies of Nestorius and Eutychius were condemned. At Nice, the creed was made to assert the proper divinity of Christ; at Constantinople, that of the Holy Ghost; at Ephesus, that the divine and the human natures in Christ are united in *one* person; and at Chalcedon, that both natures remain *distinct*, and that the humanity is not lost or absorbed in the divinity.

The creeds, thus settled at so early a day, have exerted a powerful influence in all subsequent ages in preserving the great body of the

Church from schism and from heresy in relation to those fundamental doctrines.

The great truth is, that those who object to creeds cannot sustain their objections without contradicting their own positions, and condemning their own practices. Whether they admit it or not, they, in effect and reality, have adopted a human creed. That they are not governed by *the New Testament*, or by *the Bible alone*, may easily be demonstrated. True, they acknowledge no creed but the Bible; but those who subscribe to creeds make the same profession. Wherein, then, is the difference? Let us scan this question closely. Where, we ask, is the real, the practical difference?

The creed-party say they are governed by *the Bible alone*, but honestly admit that they mean *the Bible as they understand its teachings*; and they adopt a creed as an exhibit, so far as it goes, of *what they understand the Bible to teach*. Here all is plain and open, as it should be; no one is deceived, deluded, or mystified; all may read, examine, understand, and test their positions.

But how is it with the no-creed party? They too say they are governed by *the Bible alone*. They admit no qualification. "The Bible alone," say they, "and not the Bible *as interpreted by any man or set of men*." But when we come to view the application and practical workings of this no-creed theory, as has been shown, its standard is not *the Bible alone*, allowing each one to interpret the book for himself, but the Bible as *they, the no-creed party, have agreed or may agree to interpret it*.

Now, we demand, if this be the true statement of the facts in the case, which none can deny, how is it possible to reconcile the theory with the practice of the no-creed party? Their theory is this—we are governed by *the Bible alone*; their practice is this—we are governed by the Bible *as we interpret it*. Now, there is but one possible way of reconciling these two propositions; and that is, to admit that the no-creed party are endued with *infallibility* as Bible interpreters. If there be one single point in which they interpret the Bible incorrectly, and they are governed by that interpretation (which they of course will be), then in that case *they are not governed by the Bible alone*. The conclusion therefore is inevitable, that they must either claim the infallibility assumed by the Pope, or relinquish their cherished boast that they are governed by the Bible alone in any higher sense than those who subscribe to written creeds.

There is an imposing aspect and a fragrance of liberality about the phrase, "The Bible, and the Bible alone;" but let us not be ensnared

by illusive charms, let us look at the reality of things; the substance, and not the shadow, can alone satisfy the thinking mind.

What, we ask, is a law without an expounding and executive power? Mere law in the abstract is as powerless for government, whether of Church or state, as a web of gossamer. The constitution and laws of our country are only efficacious as expounded by the courts and enforced by the executive; just so, the Scriptures can only be available for the government of the Church as interpreted and administered by some recognized power. To aver that we are governed by the New Testament, or by the Bible, amounts to nothing, unless we can determine what are the teachings of that book. The creed defines the agreed sense of those teachings, and recognizes the proper officers for administering the law and the method of proceeding therein.

Those who acknowledge no creed but the Bible must, in the nature of things, adopt some method of settling the meaning of Scripture, and of carrying out the law, otherwise they can have no government whatever. This they unquestionably have done; and disguise it as they may, they are governed, not by "the Bible alone," but by *their interpretation of the Bible*, and this interpretation, however it may be arrived at, and settled, or agreed to, is, *de facto*, their creed. Hence the conclusion of the whole matter is, that the opposition to written creeds either starts upon an erroneous basis, assuming that creeds are intended to coerce obedience upon those who have not voluntarily adopted them, and thus interfere with liberty of conscience, or it involves the no-creed party in the inconsistency of warring against creeds by the use of arguments fatal to their own position and contradictory to their own practice.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER X.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Whence has the prejudice against written creeds generally originated?</p> <p>2. How is this prejudice shown to be unwarranted?</p> <p>3. What is the first argument for the propriety and utility of creeds?</p> <p>4. How is it shown that creeds do not infringe upon the liberty of conscience?</p> <p>5. What is the second argument for creeds?</p> <p>6. Why is a creed necessary for the orderly conducting of public worship?</p> <p>7. Why is it necessary in reference to the regular preaching of the word of God?</p> <p>8. Why is it necessary in reference to the administration of the ordinances?</p> | <p>9. Why is it necessary in reference to the Sabbath and the Lord's-supper?</p> <p>10. Why, in reference to Church-discipline?</p> <p>11. What is the first objection to creeds, and how is it answered?</p> <p>12. The second, and how is it answered?</p> <p>13. The third, and how is it answered?</p> <p>14. How is it shown that those who object to creeds, in endeavoring to sustain those objections, involve themselves in self-contradiction?</p> <p>15. What is stated as the conclusion of the whole matter?</p> |
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PART IV.—THE INSTITUTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY

BOOK II.—THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NUMBER AND NATURE OF THE SACRAMENTS.

CHRISTIANITY, when compared with the Mosaic institution by which it was preceded, is emphatically a *spiritual* dispensation. Its external religious services are simple, and its rites and ceremonies are neither numerous nor burdensome. It is universally admitted by Protestants that the sacramental ordinances of the Christian Church are but two—Baptism, and the Lord's-supper.

The Roman Catholics, who have deluged the Church with so many superstitious rites and ceremonies, have added to the two sacramental ordinances of the New Testament, five others—Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction; but as none of these are presented in Scripture as *sacraments*, and as they are destitute in their nature of the essential characteristics of such ordinances, presenting no visible *sign* or *seal* of covenant relation or spiritual grace, we pass them without farther notice.

The word *μυστήριον* "means, in the New Testament, either *secret*—something unknown till revealed—or the spiritual import of an emblem or type." The word in Latin is *sacramentum*, which means a solemn religious ceremony, or oath.

There are three leading views as to the import of the Christian sacraments.

1. The Roman Catholics teach that the sacraments contain the grace they signify, and that this grace is communicated to the recipient, provided it be not prevented by a mortal sin on the part of the individual receiving it, and provided, also, that the priests administering "have an intention of doing what the Church doeth, and doth intend to do." It

will be perceived that this theory gives to the sacraments a divine and saving efficacy, independent of faith, or any good disposition, or moral qualification whatever (a mortal sin excepted), on the part of the recipient. A doctrine so absurd as this can have no Scripture for its support, and, of course, must ground its claims wholly upon the traditions of a superstitious Church.

2. The second view of the subject is that maintained by Socinians, and more or less followed by Arians, Unitarians, Universalists, and even too much favored by some Protestants having higher claims to orthodoxy. This theory does not allow any *essential* difference between a sacrament and any other religious rite or ceremony; the only peculiarity of a sacrament, according to this scheme, being its emblematic character, representing spiritual grace by visible signs, and being a memorial of past events. Hence, according to this theory, a sacrament is merely a help to the exercise of faith and pious meditation, and a means of promoting the graces of Christian character.

3. The third view is that entertained by the great body of orthodox Protestants. While it admits and contends for all that the second theory implies, it maintains that a Christian sacrament has yet a deeper and more comprehensive import. The true meaning of a sacrament is well expressed in our sixteenth Article of Religion, thus:

“Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men’s profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God’s good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.”

This substantially agrees with the creeds of orthodox Protestants generally. Accordingly it appears that Christian sacraments are—

1. *Ordinances of Christ.* They are institutions of his own express appointment. At the close of the Passover he ordained the “Supper,” administering to the “twelve” the “bread” and the “wine,” saying, “This do in remembrance of me.” In the great commission he instituted the Christian Baptism, saying, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, *baptizing* them,” etc.

2. *They are signs.* They are visible emblems of internal spiritual grace. The *baptismal water* points us to the corruption and depravity of our nature, which needs cleansing, and to the fountain of grace by which we may be washed and purified. The *bread* and the *wine* direct our faith to the atonement of Christ—to his broken body and shed blood—exhibiting his redeeming mercy and love in suffering for sinners, that he might bring them to God.

3. *They are seals.* As circumcision was the divinely-appointed *seal* of the covenant of redemption as given to Abraham, so "Baptism" and the "Supper" are *seals* under the gospel of the same covenant. By giving us these *seals*, God confirms unto us visibly the promise of his saving mercy. By receiving them, we enter upon the most solemn obligations of fidelity and obedience to God. Thus these sacraments, while we attach to them no superstitious idea of efficacy as a *charm*, or of directly imparting a spiritual benefit through a physical agency, yet are they a most influential means of grace. They tend to increase and confirm our faith, to quicken our spiritual powers, to encourage our hopes, and to renew and strengthen our obligations to love and to serve God.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XI.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What are the Christian sacraments as enumerated by the Roman Catholics?</p> <p>2. Which of these are destitute of Bible authority?</p> <p>3. What are the Christian sacraments as set forth in Scripture?</p> <p>4. What is the Greek word for sacrament, and what is its import?</p> | <p>5. What is the Roman Catholic view as to the nature and efficacy of sacraments?</p> <p>6. What is the view of Socinians, Arians, Universalists, etc.?</p> <p>7. What is the orthodox view on the subject?</p> |
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CHAPTER XII.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM — ITS NATURE, OBLIGATION, DESIGN, AND EFFICACY.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM is a subject upon which, for centuries past, there has, perhaps, been a greater amount of polemic strife than upon any other theological question. Upon this arena master combatants oft and again have fiercely met, and plied their utmost skill and strength, and left the field with the question no nearer being settled than when they began. Judging from the past, we may reasonably despair of perfect harmony of sentiment in the Church on this trite and much-mooted theme till the second coming of Christ. In the present stage of this controversy we can scarcely hope to present any thing substantially *new*; nor shall we aim at any thing farther than a clear and condensed view of the leading and most important arguments necessary to sustain what we consider the correct and scriptural statement of the doctrine.

I. The first question in connection with this theme naturally presenting itself for our consideration is this: What is the *NATURE* of *Christian baptism*?

As this is admitted to be what is termed a *positive* institute, it is clear that we are dependent entirely upon the divine record for our information.

The term *baptism* is from the Greek βαπτίζω, which is a derivative of βάπτω. This word, according to the lexicographers, means "*to dip, to plunge into water, to wash, to dye,*" etc. It is, however, very clear that the etymology of the word can furnish us no information as to the *nature* or *design* of the ordinance. Upon *this* point, whatever we may conclude as to the *mode* and *subjects* of baptism, no light can be shed by the etymological discussion; and we may also add that, in the question now before us, we have nothing whatever to do with the *mode* or *subjects* of baptism. Those matters must be held in abeyance for after consideration.

As to the *nature* and *design* of baptism, we must rely solely on the history of the subject and the statements concerning it, as recorded in the Bible. It is admitted that our Saviour ingrafted the sacrament of

the "Lord's-supper" on the Jewish Passover; and it may be affirmed that "Baptism," the other Christian sacrament, had its origin in a similar way—being substituted for "circumcision." The institution of Christian baptism unquestionably was set up and established in the great commission given to the apostles by the Saviour after his resurrection: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Here we date the divine origin of baptism as a standing, obligatory, and perpetual ordinance of the Christian Church. Here is the great charter from which the Christian ministry in all ages derive their divine authority for the administration of this ordinance.

But notwithstanding this ordinance, as a permanent Christian institute, was here established, it is clear that baptism did not then for the first time take its existence in the Church. Though our Saviour here gave it a new, specific designation, it was no new institution hitherto unheard of: he does not refer to it as such, but speaks of it as something with which the disciples were already acquainted. Under the direction of our Lord, they had already been practicing a baptism probably but little different from that of John, with which the whole Jewish nation were familiar.

1. That *baptism was practiced among the Jews long before the time of John*, and probably from the commencement of the Mosaic economy, we have good evidence for believing.

St. Paul speaks of "divers washings" (*βαπτισμοῖς*, baptisms) as existing among the Jews (Heb. ix. 10). And Maimonides testifies that "in all ages, when a heathen was willing to enter into the covenant of Israel, and gather himself under the wings of the majesty of God, and take upon himself the yoke of the law, he must be first circumcised, and secondly, *baptized*, and thirdly, bring a sacrifice; or, if the party were a woman, then she must be first *baptized*, and secondly, bring a sacrifice." He adds: "At this present time, when (the temple being destroyed) there is no sacrificing, a stranger must be first circumcised, and secondly, *baptized*."

From Epictetus we have the following testimony (he is blaming those who assume the profession of philosophy without acting up to it): "Why do you call yourself a Stoic? Why do you deceive the multitude? Why do you pretend to be a Greek when you are a Jew, a Syrian, an Egyptian? And when you see any one wavering, we are wont to say, This is not a Jew, but acts one; but when he assumes the

sentiments of one who has been *baptized* and *circumcised*, then he both really is and is called a Jew. Thus we, falsifying our profession, are Jews in name, but in reality something else."

This ancient Jewish baptism of proselytes, concerning the existence of which there can be no rational doubt, seems to have been an act of *initiation*, or of transfer from paganism to Judaism. As the Jew, when from any cause he had become ceremonially unclean, was excommunicated or cut off from the privileges of the Church till he had performed the washings, or *baptisms*, prescribed by the law, so the Gentile, on being publicly admitted into the Church, was also required to submit to a washing, or baptism, to signify his being purified from the pollutions of his former religion. All we can learn, therefore, as to the nature and design of this proselyte baptism is, that it was a public act of *initiation*, signifying *purification*. As to the various "washings," or baptisms, among the Jews themselves, they all denoted that ceremonial purification from defilement which the law described.

2. The "*baptism of John*" next demands a brief notice. This baptism, till recently, has been generally held by immersionists as identical with, or as *really* the commencement of, the Christian baptism; but this preposterous view seems to be now pretty generally abandoned by the more intelligent Baptists, and especially has it been renounced by Alexander Campbell, one of the most learned immersionists of the age. Yet as this absurd notion is still firmly grounded in the prejudice of many, it merits some attention.

That "John's baptism" was not the *Christian* baptism is manifest from several considerations.

(1) The distinctive *appellation* given it in Scripture shows that it was not the Christian baptism. It is called "*John's baptism*." How absurd would it be to speak of "Peter's baptism," "Paul's baptism," or "Apollos's baptism!" Yet if "John's baptism" were identical with the Christian baptism, such expressions would be no more absurd than to speak of "John's baptism."

(2) The difference in the *formula* used in the Christian baptism and that of John clearly evinces that the two baptisms were not identical. The formula of the Christian baptism runs thus: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" or, as it is sometimes more briefly expressed, "In the name of the Lord Jesus." John evidently did not, nor *could* he, use language of any such import.

(3) The character of John's *dispensation* renders it impossible that his baptism could have been the same as the Christian. John was the forerunner of Christ, and his dispensation was but *preparatory* to that

of the gospel. This appears from the words of John himself. In speaking of Christ he says: "He must increase, but I must decrease"—that is, my dispensation must quickly pass away, like unto "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," that quickly dies upon the ear, but his "kingdom" shall increase more and more, "for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Again, Jesus says: "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The "kingdom of heaven" here evidently means the gospel Church, and he that is *least* in that Church can only be said to be greater than John, because of the fact that he lives in the enjoyment of the superior blessings of the gospel dispensation, while the dispensation of John was *inferior* and only *preparatory*.

(4) That "John's baptism" could not be the *Christian* baptism, is evident from the fact that *it had passed away before Christianity was introduced*. John began to preach and baptize six months before our Saviour entered upon his public ministry. Hence, if John's was the Christian baptism, it would follow that this initiatory rite was not instituted by Christ himself, but by his forerunner, at least six months previous to the existence of Christianity. Into what absurdities does error impel her votaries!

(5) The *condition* and *requirements* of "John's baptism" are so different from those of the Christian baptism, that the two could not have been identical. John simply demanded of the people *repentance*, saying: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. iii. 8); or, as St. Paul expresses it, "John verily baptized with the baptism of *repentance*, saying unto the people that they should *believe on him which should come after him*." But in the Christian baptism there is not only required *repentance*, but also faith—not in a *Messiah to come*, but in a Saviour who has already come, and suffered, and died for our sins, and risen again for our justification; for St. Paul says: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" And when the eunuch demanded baptism, the reply of Philip was: "If thou *believest* with all thy heart, thou mayest." Here we see that in Christian baptism there is required not only faith in Christ as a manifested Saviour, but a faith realizing and introducing the subject of it into the enjoyment of the full benefits of his sacrificial death in the remission of sin and the renewing of the soul by the influence of the Holy Spirit. John did not even baptize in the name of Christ. How, then, could his be the Christian baptism?

(6) Again, the example of the apostles in *rebaptizing John's disciples*

when they were converted to Christianity, is the most direct proof that the two baptisms were not the same. (See Acts xix. 1-5.) We know that an effort has been made by some who hold to "John's baptism" as a Christian institute, to construe this passage in such manner that it shall not teach the rebaptism of John's disciples; but we consider the passage so plain, that the effort to escape its force by any other than the obvious construction that records the *rebaptism of John's disciples*, is too manifestly strained to be dictated by any thing but prejudice; therefore we deem it unworthy of a reply.

Although we conclude, for the reasons given, that the baptism of John was not identical with the permanent Christian baptism instituted by Christ, yet it was divinely sanctioned, and served the purpose for which it was intended. It bore the same relation to the Christian baptism that John's ministry did to that of the apostles when they went forth in the discharge of their great commission after having been "endued with power from on high." As to its *nature* and *design*, all we can learn is, that it served as a *badge of profession*, or as an *initiatory rite* into John's dispensation, implying that its recipient made a public confession of his sins, and a profession of repentance, and of faith in a Messiah soon to appear. With John's disciples, baptism was an application of water, used as an emblem of the *moral purification* preparatory for that reception of the Messiah which repentance implied, and a *profession of faith* in the doctrines of John's dispensation.

The baptism which Christ commanded his disciples to perform during his personal ministry, and previous to his crucifixion, however it may have differed in character from that of John's, was not the same baptism which was afterward appointed under the perfected gospel system, and which was to be perpetuated "alway, even unto the end of the world." The baptism connected with Christ's personal ministry bore the same relation to the *Christian* baptism that his personal teachings, while he was (as Paul declares, Rom. xv. 8) "a minister of the circumcision," bore to the gospel in its complete development after the Pentecostal baptism had been conferred. Christ's personal ministry, previous to Pentecost, and also that of his disciples, were only *preparatory* to the full development of the gospel kingdom. The mission was, then, not to the Gentiles, but to the Jews. Jesus "came unto his own;" that is, the Jews. And he said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. xv. 24.) The mission of the apostles was, then, "not into the way of the Gentiles," or "into any city of the Samaritans," but "unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

This baptism was, nevertheless, a *badge of profession*; for it designated

its subjects as "disciples" of Jesus, and believers in him as a "teacher come from God." It differed from the *Christian* baptism, first, because it was not "*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;*" secondly, because it did not recognize in its profession of faith a crucified and risen Messiah. It was no more identical with the *Christian* baptism instituted in the great apostolic commission, than was that of John. A person baptized with the faith required, either in John's baptism or that of Christ's apostles, previous to the grand commission given after Christ's resurrection, could not be thereby admitted into communion in any genuine Christian Church in the world. Such a baptism and such a faith would rather indicate a Jew than a Christian.

II. We now proceed to examine the OBLIGATION OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM in the proper sense of that term.

Christian baptism is an ordinance of *universal* and *perpetual obligation*.

By this we mean that it is the duty of all who would become Christians to be baptized, and that this obligation was not a temporary requirement, but is to be perpetuated in the Church "alway, even unto the end of the world."

We know of no denomination, "professing and calling themselves Christians," who have denied the perpetuity of this ordinance in the Christian Church, except the Quakers. It is, however, admitted that some among the Socinians, Unitarians, and other classes of sectaries of loose principles and heterodox creed, have lightly esteemed water baptism, contemplating it as possessing no *sacramental* character, but being mainly an external mark of distinction between Pagans and Christians; useful at the introduction of the gospel in Pagan countries, but not necessary as a perpetual ordinance of the Church. It has been well said that "extremes beget extremes;" and, perhaps, the early tendency in the Church to magnify the importance of external rites, and attach a superstitious and unscriptural efficacy to mere forms and ceremonies, has tended to drive some to the opposite extreme of esteeming them too lightly. Indeed, the error, in this respect, of the Mystics, Quakers, Socinians, and all others who have repudiated or undervalued water baptism or other external rites, is but an outbirth from the opposite and more dangerous theories concerning *sacramental salvation, water regeneration*, etc.

That water baptism is an institution of perpetual obligation in the Church, is a clear deduction from the language of the great apostolic commission: "Go ye therefore, and teach *all nations, baptizing them* in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; *teach-*

ing them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you *always, even unto the end of the world.*" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) Or as it is recorded by St. Mark: "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

From the terms of this commission it is settled beyond dispute—1. That it is to extend *universally over the world*—"all nations"—"all the world"—"every creature." This language admits of no restriction to the *commencement* of the dispensation, or to the *introduction* of the gospel in a Pagan country. 2. The *perpetuity* of the institution of baptism is here unquestionably established: "Always, even unto the end of the world." This phrase, as well as the language recorded by St. Mark—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"—can only be rationally interpreted as teaching the *perpetuity* of the commission, and the performance of water baptism as one of its *abiding* functions. Other scriptures, to the same effect, might be quoted; but it is sufficient to add that in all the Bible, whether we refer to those predictions of the prophets concerning the gospel dispensation in which water baptism is evidently referred to, or to the teachings of Christ, or to the writings and administration of his inspired apostles, there is not the slightest intimation that this ordinance was ever to be discontinued. To set aside the obligation of water baptism (though the error might be less pernicious), would be equally as destitute of authority from Scripture, as to discard the requirement of repentance or of faith.

It may be proper, however, before we dismiss this point, to inquire upon what ground the attempt has been made to disprove the perpetuity of this ordinance.

In addition to mere reasoning from general principles, based upon the admitted fact of the *spirituality* of the gospel dispensation, as contrasted with the *ceremonial* character of that of Moses, express Scripture authority has been invoked to disprove the perpetual obligation of water baptism.

On this subject some have founded an argument on the words of John: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Here John shows *his* inferiority to the *Messiah*, from the fact that he (John) baptized *only* "with water," but Christ would "baptize with *the Holy Ghost*." But how gratuitous and preposterous is it to infer that because the Saviour baptized "with the Holy Ghost," therefore he could not authorize baptism "with water." But how monstrous must this inference appear, when it is remembered that it so flatly contradicts the plain history of the facts! for on the

very day of Pentecost, when the baptism of the Holy Ghost was first poured out, "three thousand" were also baptized with water. And again, when, under the preaching of Peter, the *baptism of the Holy Ghost* fell on the first Gentile converts in the house of Cornelius, so far from *this* baptism superseding that of *water*, the apostle infers the *propriety* of the one from the *fact* of the other. His language is, "Can any man forbid *water*, that these should not be baptized, which have received the *Holy Ghost* as well as we?" Indeed, we may say that to discard water baptism as a mere temporary appendage, and not a permanent institution of the gospe., is not to be guided by the New Testament, but to proceed in direct opposition to its history. Hence, we conclude that while the gospel shall continue to be preached in the world, and the organization of the Christian Church shall be preserved, water baptism, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," will still be required.

III. We have already contemplated baptism, as also the other sacrament—the Lord's-supper—as a *sign* and *seal* of "internal spiritual grace." We now inquire more particularly concerning the *design* and *efficacy* of baptism.

1. The first theory upon this subject which we shall notice, is that of the Roman Catholics. They attribute to this sacrament a *saving efficacy*—teaching that, in some mysterious way, there is directly imparted through this ordinance, when properly administered, spiritual grace, in such sense, that whatever may be the character of the subject (unless he be guilty of some mortal sin), his moral nature is at once regenerated and sanctified; thus attributing to the element of water the *efficacy* pertaining alone to the blood of Christ, and to the agency of the priest the work of regeneration and sanctification, which can only be effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

2. Another theory, somewhat different from the view just presented, though closely allied to it, has been sanctioned by a class of High-church Episcopalians, and very zealously advocated by Alexander Campbell and his followers. This theory, while it rejects the notion that there is any saving efficacy in the sacrament of baptism itself, or any spiritual grace directly imparted through this application of water, independent of the character or disposition of the subject, yet maintains that baptism, properly administered and received, secures the grace of regeneration, and is the means and pledge of the remission of sins.

The abettors of this theory are, however, not agreed among themselves as to the import of regeneration. While some of them understand the term as implying, according to its commonly received import, a *change*

of *heart*, or a renewal of the moral nature, others construe it as meaning only a *change of state*; yet they harmonize in the position that the remission of sins is promised only through baptism, and, consequently, that without baptism an evidence of forgiveness cannot be obtained. Alexander Campbell has expressed his peculiar theory upon this subject in the following language: "We have the most explicit proof that God forgives sins for the name's sake of his Son, or when the name of Jesus Christ is named upon us in immersion; that in and by the act of immersion, so soon as our bodies are put under water, at that very instant our former or 'old sins' are all washed away, provided only that we are true believers."

It is apparent, from the account just given of the views of Roman Catholics, High-church Episcopalians, and of Alexander Campbell, as to the connection of baptism with regeneration and the remission of sins, that there are several shades of difference in sentiment among them. Yet, so closely are they allied, that a refutation of the position of Mr. Campbell, as just presented in his own language, will comprise a refutation of all the schemes to which we have referred. Therefore, we proceed directly to examine that position.

The position is substantially this: that the remission of sins is imparted only through baptism.

This, which is the theory of Mr. Campbell, we consider but little better than the doctrine of the High-church Episcopalians or of the Roman Catholics. These schemes, we are satisfied, are radically erroneous, substituting, in effect, the element of water and the physical agency of man for the blood of Christ and the divine agency of the Holy Spirit.

Now, if we can show that there is some other condition, separate and distinct from baptism, with which the remission of sins is inseparably connected, and that remission is not thus inseparably connected with baptism, it will follow, of course, that the position we oppose cannot be true.

We appeal, then, "to the law and to the testimony." "He that *believeth* on him is not condemned." (John iii. 18.) "He that *believeth* on the Son *hath everlasting life*." (John iii. 36.) "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that *believeth* on me *hath everlasting life*." (John iii. 47.) "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified *by faith* without the deeds of the law." (Rom. iii. 28.) "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever *believeth* in him *shall receive remission of sins*." (Acts x. 43.)

A large portion of Scripture, to the same effect, might be adduced; but to add more is needless. If the above passages do not decide the

point that *faith*, and not *baptism*, is the condition on which the "remission of sins" turns, no language could be framed to prove the position. Here we are taught that every *believer* is freed from "condemnation"—"hath everlasting life"—"is justified"—and "shall receive remission of sins." Now, we affirm that no man *can* possess all these things and his sins *not* be remitted. Can a man be "not condemned," "have everlasting life," and be "justified," and his sins not be remitted? The supposition is utterly inadmissible. Can he have *faith* without baptism? Surely he can. Why not? Then it follows that his sins may be remitted without baptism. Indeed, Mr. Campbell's system not only contradicts the Bible, but fights against itself. Mr. Campbell teaches that a man must have *faith* before he can properly receive baptism; but if he has *faith*, if the Bible be true, "his sins *are* remitted;" and Mr. Campbell correctly tells us that if he has not *faith*, his sins will not be remitted in baptism. Hence it follows that if all who believe (as the Bible teaches) have already received "remission of sins," and if (as Mr. Campbell teaches) they can only receive the "remission of sins" by first believing and then being baptized, it amounts to this: a man must *first* have "his sins remitted" *before they can be remitted*—that is, a thing must *be* before it *can be*. The truth is, the theory that "remission of sins" is inseparably connected with baptism flatly contradicts the Bible. The Bible connects remission inseparably with *faith*. Admit the truth of this position (which we cannot deny without flatly contradicting many plain scriptures, as we have shown), then we cannot escape the conclusion, according to Mr. Campbell, that we must *first have remission before we can have it*, which is a contradiction.

We take the first text which we quoted above—"He that believeth on him is not condemned"—and if there were no other scripture bearing on the subject, this alone contains a proof of the position for which we here contend, that can never be shaken (unless we flatly contradict the Saviour) by all the skill, ingenuity, and sophistry in the world. "He that believeth on him is not condemned." Now, if this text means anything, it means this: that all who believe on Christ are, *that instant—the very moment they first believe on Christ*—free from *condemnation*; and if free from *condemnation*, then they are *pardoned, forgiven*, their *sins are remitted*, they are *justified*, they are *the children of God*, they "shall not come into *condemnation*, but are passed from *death* unto *life*." Can language be plainer, or proof clearer or more direct? If it be, then, a settled Bible maxim that the "remission of sins" is inseparably connected with *faith*, can it, at the same time, be inseparably connected with *baptism*? It is utterly impossible, unless we say that *faith*

also is inseparably connected with baptism. We arrive again at the same conclusion—*faith* gives *remission*; but if *faith* must *first exist* in order to proper baptism, then baptism cannot give remission; for you cannot give a man what he already possesses.

Seeing, then, that the Scriptures so explicitly and so abundantly teach that the “remission of sins” is inseparably connected with *faith*, we now examine those texts which, it is alleged, teach that “remission of sins” is inseparably connected with *baptism*. Of one thing we may be well assured: the Scriptures do not contradict themselves. If, therefore, it can be established from the Scriptures that “remission of sins” is inseparably connected with baptism, then it will necessarily follow that *faith* is inseparably connected with baptism; for “things equal to the same are equal to one another.”

The main reliance of the advocates of the system of baptismal regeneration and remission is on the words of Peter in his sermon at Pentecost: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts ii. 38.) Now, the question is, does this text necessarily prove the inseparable connection of the remission of sins with baptism? We contend that it does not. In the phrase, “for the remission of sins,” great stress has been laid on the meaning of the Greek preposition, *εἰς*, which, it is contended, should have been translated “*in order to*,” instead of “*for*.” We attach no importance whatever to the controversy about the translation. The same preposition, as may be shown from numerous examples in the New Testament, may be translated in either way. It often means “*in order to*,” and it often means “*in reference to*,” or “*on account of*,” and the context must determine the proper sense. But the rendering of the preposition in this instance can have no effect upon the question before us. The question is this: Is it clearly taught that baptism is here presented as the essential and inseparable condition of remission? Under the sermon of Peter the wicked Jews were “pricked in their heart;” that is, they were *convicted*, and cried out: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” They seem to have been in a similar condition to that of the jailer when he exclaimed, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” In this condition were they when “Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized,” etc. Now, as it is evident from this language that they had not yet evangelically *repented*, is it not also clearly implied that they had not yet *believed* “to the saving of the soul?”

In the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter, in referring to the conversion of the Jews at Pentecost, clearly teaches that

faith, and not *baptism*, was the great instrument of their salvation. In arguing that the Gentiles, who had embraced the gospel, should be received into the communion of the Church, Peter speaks as follows: "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and *believe*. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even *as he did unto us*; and put no difference between us and them, *purifying their hearts by faith*." Here, in speaking of the salvation of the Gentiles, the apostle refers not to their *baptism*, but to their *faith*—"that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and *believe*." And, again, he says: "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by *faith*." Now, here is proof positive that the Gentiles had their hearts purified by *faith*, and not by *baptism*; that is, they were *converted, justified, pardoned, saved*, and their *sins were remitted by faith*, not *baptism*.

Again, precisely as it was with the Gentiles, so was it with the Jews at Pentecost. God put no difference between them. According to St. Peter, then, as the Gentiles received remission through *faith*, so did the Jews at Pentecost. Thus it is clear that, according to the apostle's comment on his own words, when he said, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins," *faith* was necessarily implied in connection with *repentance*, as the grand instrument or condition through which remission was obtained. It is, therefore, manifest that the passage under review, so far from teaching that baptism is the instrument, condition, or means, by or through which the remission of sins is obtained, does, most explicitly, when the apostle is allowed to comment on his own language, teach the inseparable connection of the remission of sins with *faith*, and not with *baptism*.

One or two other texts have also been urged in support of the theory here opposed. For instance, the words of Ananias to Saul have been quoted: "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." But the arguments already presented on the subject will apply with equal force against the doctrine, from whatever Scripture its proof may be attempted; therefore, we examine the testimony no farther.

We arrive, then, at the conclusion that although water baptism should not be too lightly esteemed, and either set aside as not necessary under the gospel, or viewed as merely a form of initiation, or as a help to the exercise of faith, neither, on the other hand, should it be exalted too highly, as possessing intrinsic virtue and saving efficacy. The truth is

this: it is a *sign* of Christian men's profession, and also of the inward spiritual grace of regeneration and sanctification, and a *seal* of the gracious covenant by which the Church relation and the promise of eternal life are confirmed unto God's people.

But yet, it is but an external ordinance. It is no substitute for the blood of atonement, by which alone sins can be washed away; or for the influence of the Holy Spirit, by which alone the regeneration and sanctification of the soul can be secured.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What is the <i>etymology</i> of the word <i>baptism</i>?</p> <p>2. Can it impart any light as to the <i>nature</i> or <i>design</i> of the ordinance?</p> <p>3. Where do we date the <i>origin</i> of <i>Christian baptism</i>?</p> <p>4. What evidence have we that the Jews practiced a <i>proselyte baptism</i>?</p> <p>5. What was its <i>design</i>?</p> <p>6. What was the <i>design</i> of the <i>Jewish baptisms under the law</i>?</p> <p>7. What was the nature of <i>John's baptism</i>?</p> <p>8. How is it proved that <i>John's</i> was not the <i>Christian baptism</i>?</p> <p>9. What <i>relation</i> did the baptism Christ commanded his disciples to perform previous to his crucifixion, sustain to the <i>Christian baptism</i>?</p> <p>10. Is the Christian baptism of <i>universal</i> <i>eternal</i> <i>perpetual obligation</i>?</p> | <p>11. By what <i>arguments</i> is this position sustained?</p> <p>12. How has the attempt been made to <i>disprove</i> the position?</p> <p>13. What is the Roman Catholic view as to the nature of Christian baptism?</p> <p>14. What the view of High-church Episcopalians?</p> <p>15. What the view of Alexander Campbell?</p> <p>16. Is there any material difference between these views?</p> <p>17. How may Mr. Campbell's view be shown to be erroneous?</p> <p>18. Upon what scriptures has he mainly based his argument on this subject?</p> <p>19. What is the reply to his argument?</p> |
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CHAPTER XIII.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM—ITS SUBJECTS.

It is admitted by all who believe in the propriety of water baptism that *believers in Christ*, or all who are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," are proper subjects of baptism; hence we deem it useless to stop a moment to present proof upon that subject. The question we propound is this, Are *believers* the *only* proper subjects of baptism? That the Baptist position upon this question is erroneous, we shall endeavor to show.

I. That the *INFANT CHILDREN* of believing parents are proper subjects of Christian baptism, is a plain, direct, and necessary inference from the *express statute and appointment of God*.

He who will believe nothing that is not formally declared, in so many words, in Scripture, must expunge from his creed a large portion of the important truths which are firmly believed by the entire body of orthodox Christians. It is admitted by every intelligent, unbiased mind that, in all the judicial proceedings of courts, and according to the acknowledged principles of sound logic, *inferential testimony* is often as satisfactory and convincing as direct proof possibly can be; therefore to discard or deny the validity of inferential testimony, is only to give evidence that we are governed in our opinions by the arbitrary impulse of blinded prejudice rather than the sober dictates of calm and correct reasoning. To illustrate this principle, we remark that the Scriptures nowhere, in direct terms, declare that God exists; yet who will not admit that the existence of God is abundantly established in the Bible by inferential testimony? There is no record in Scripture commanding sacrificial worship in the patriarchal age; yet who for a moment can doubt that this method of worship originated in divine appointment? There is no direct precept in the Bible changing the Sabbath to the *first* day of the week, yet the fact is generally recognized. Family prayer is admitted to be a duty, but where is direct precept for it? Similar observations might be made in reference to various other important religious obligations, which, though not di-

rectly enjoined, are acknowledged to rest on inferential testimony entirely satisfactory.

We will now proceed to show that infant baptism is established by inferential testimony deduced from the direct command of God. And, first, we remark that all law, to be obligatory upon the subject, must be enacted by a power having the right to command; and when thus enacted, it remains in force until the same authority by which it was enacted, or some other power of equal authority, shall repeal it. The truth of this position, we think, cannot be questioned. Now if it can be shown that the right of infants to membership in the Church of God was once established by direct enactment of Heaven, and that the right of baptism now pertains to all who are entitled to membership in the Church, it necessarily follows that infants are entitled to baptism, unless it can be shown that the divine enactment by which their membership in the Church was once recognized has been annulled by the authority of God.

That the premises in this argument may be rendered indubitable, we proceed, *first*, to show that infants were embraced in the *Abrahamic covenant*, and were by the appointment of God recognized as members of the Church established in the family of that patriarch, and signed and sealed as such by the rite of circumcision. God spoke thus to Abraham: "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations. . . . And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." Gen. xvii. 10-14.

Upon this subject we consider it needless to multiply quotations. The point before us is a very plain one. The position we here take, we believe, is universally admitted. Indeed, it cannot be denied. It is this, that infants, both male and female, were admitted by the circumcision of the males into the covenant relation to God, as members of the Church of God, from the establishment of that Church in Abraham's family down to the coming of Christ.

II. We proceed, in the next place, to show that *the covenant made with Abraham, and the Church established in his family on the basis of that covenant, were substantially THE SAME COVENANT AND THE SAME CHURCH more fully unfolded and continued under the gospel dispensation.*

It is readily admitted that the gospel, as set forth in the New Testament, reveals a *new dispensation* of religion; but the question is, Does it exhibit an *essentially new Church*? We affirm that it does not.

What, we demand, constitutes the *essential identity* of the Church? Is it necessary that it be the same in every particular circumstance pertaining to it? Surely not. By this rule nothing belonging to this world preserves its identity for a single day; for all things about us are subject to continual mutations. The human body is constantly changing, yet the babe of a day old maintains its essential identity up to old age. A political government may undergo numerous important modifications, yet it may continue the identical government for a succession of years, or even for centuries; just so, the Church may preserve its essential identity while it passes through a variety of fortunes. The government of Great Britain, or of the United States, may experience a variety of changes—it may change its chief ruler, its ministry, its administration, and measures of policy; yet still, while its constitution and governing power remain essentially the same, it is the same government.

With these general principles before us, we will examine the Scriptures touching the *identity* of the Church from the days of Abraham to the present time.

First, we notice the *appellations* given to the Church in ancient times. God styles the descendants of Abraham his "people," his "sheep," his "vine" or "vineyard," his "children," his "elect" or "chosen," his "own," his "sons and daughters," and his "Church." St. Stephen terms the Jewish people in the days of Moses the "Church": "This is he that was in the Church (*ἐκκλησία*) in the wilderness," etc. Acts vii. 38. David uses similar language: "In the midst of the Church (*kahal—ἐκκλησία*) will I praise thee." Ps. xxii. 22. In confirmation of the same position, St. Paul says: "Unto us was the *gospel preached*, as well as unto them." Heb. iv. 2. And again: "They did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and *that Rock was Christ*." 1 Cor. x. 4. And Christ says: "Abraham rejoiced to see *my day*; and *he saw it*, and was glad." John viii. 56.

The identity of the Jewish Church with that of the gospel is also manifest from the words of Christ to the Jews: "Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. xxi. 43. Read the whole parable upon which this text is the comment, and then say, What "kingdom" was to be "taken from" the Jews and "given" to the Gen

tiles? If it was not the Church, what else could it have been? The passage is susceptible of no other interpretation. The "kingdom of God" taken from the Jews was identical with the "kingdom" given to the Gentiles; hence the Jewish and Christian Churches are essentially the same.

St. Paul exhibits the Church of God under the emblem of an "olive-tree." This he borrows from Jeremiah, who, speaking of the Jewish Church, says: "The Lord called thy name, A green *olive-tree*, fair, and of goodly fruit; with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken." Jer. xi. 16.

In reference to the rejection of the Jews and the admission of the Gentiles into the Church under the gospel, St. Paul comments as follows: "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree." Rom. xi. 15-24.

The scope of the apostle's reasoning is so plain here that it cannot be misunderstood by an intelligent, unbiassed person. The Jews were originally embraced in Church relation with Abraham and the heads of the Jewish Church, who are represented as the "first-fruit" which was "holy"—that is, they were consecrated, or set apart in a sacred Church relation, represented under the emblem of a "good olive-tree." From this tree they were "broken off" because of unbelief. Into this same tree, or into the same covenant relation and Church privileges, the believing Gentiles were ingrafted. But did this rejection of the unbelieving Jews destroy the primitive Church of God into which they

had been taken? By no means. The unfruitful branches "were broken off," but the original stock remained. The "good olive-tree" yet stood firm, and into the same stock the Gentiles were ingrafted.

The Gentile Church was formed, not by the planting of an original tree, not by a new Church organization from the foundation, but by the bringing of new materials upon the old foundation. The establishment of the Christian Church was not the erection of a *new* house, but the removal of "the middle wall of partition," that both Jews and Gentiles, according to God's original purpose and the promise made to Abraham, might dwell together as one "household of faith" in that same divinely constructed edifice which was "built upon the foundation," (not of the apostles alone, but) "of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." Eph. ii. 20.

Now, we demand, unless the New Testament Church is a continuation of the original Church established in the family of Abraham, *essentially* the same, though under a change of dispensation, how is it possible to place any sensible construction upon the language of St. Paul in the passage presented? We confidently affirm that the passage admits of no other interpretation; and if so, does it not follow that as infants were by divine appointment received into the Abrahamic Church, therefore they still retain the right of Church-membership derived from the original charter, and consequently they have a right to baptism. The only possible way to escape this conclusion will be to show that the law of God conferring upon infants, in the days of Abraham, the right to covenant and Church privileges has been repealed under the gospel; but this never has been, and, as we are sure, never can be done.

III. As another link in our chain of argument, we proceed to show that BAPTISM CAME IN THE ROOM OF CIRCUMCISION.

For one thing to be admitted as a *substitute* for or *in the room of* another, it is not necessary that they be the same *in every particular and circumstance*; for then the two would be identical, and the idea of substitution would be an absurdity. It is enough if they occupy the same essential position, and serve the same purpose in reference to their most important particulars.

That the sacrament of the "Supper" is in the room of the "Pass-over" will not be disputed. They are both feasts to be regularly kept up by the people of God; they both have a spiritual import expressed under emblems; they were both designed to assist the faith and promote the spiritual improvement of the worshipers; they both pointed to the same great sacrifice—"the Lamb of God, which taketh away

the sin of the world;" yet they differed in various particulars, and these points of difference were precisely of such character as the nature of the two dispensations would naturally indicate.

The gospel is peculiarly contradistinguished from the Mosaic institute as well as from the patriarchal religion by its *greater degree of mildness and the extension of its privileges*; so it is with the "Supper" as compared with the "Passover." In the one, was the bloody offering of the slain lamb and the partaking of a full meal; in the other, is simply the contrite and believing heart with the "bread" and the "wine." The one is certainly done away; and the other, ordained in its room and stead, is to be perpetuated "always," showing "the Lord's death till he come." The one looked through the dim distance to a Messiah *to come*; the other, to Calvary, to him who had already come, and died for the sins of the world.

As the "Lord's-supper" is related to the "Passover," just so is "baptism" to "circumcision." The analogy in the case is almost perfect. Baptism, as compared with circumcision, is milder in its requirements, and more extended in the application of its privileges. In the one, we see a bloody and painful rite; in the other, the pure fountain of baptismal water. In the one, the Jews only, as a nation, are concerned; in the other, the mission is to "all the world," to "every creature." In the one, the requirement only referred to *males*, and the *eighth day* was specifically designated as the time for the observance of the rite; in the other, both sexes were included, and all days, and times, and seasons, were alike sanctioned and allowed. Thus it appears that although baptism differed in several particulars from circumcision, yet, in all these points of difference, the change from the one to the other is only such as the peculiar characteristics of the gospel would naturally indicate.

But we now inquire for the evidence sustaining the position that *baptism is in the room of circumcision*.

1. They are *seals* and *signs* of the same covenant.

In the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul, speaking of Abraham, says: "He received the *sign* of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law

be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. . . . Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations.)" Rom. iv. 11-17.

The account here given of circumcision is susceptible of no sensible solution, unless we interpret it to teach that circumcision occupied, in connection with the ancient Church, precisely the same position that is filled by baptism under the gospel. It is here a *sign* and a *seal*, but of what? Was it a sign and seal of the Sinaitic covenant? Did it partake of the nature of the ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual? Did it merely ratify the divine promise to the Jews of the temporal mercies of Canaan? Surely no such construction is admissible. It sealed "the righteousness of faith," not that of the law; even the righteousness which Abraham had, "yet being uncircumcised." It was a seal of the covenant under which Abraham was "justified by faith," "that he might be the father of all who believe" under the gospel.

Was circumcision the initiatory rite of the Church in the days of Abraham and Moses? so was baptism in the days of Peter and of Paul. Was circumcision a sign or token of visible membership in the Church of God, and of covenant relation to him? so is baptism. Was circumcision an emblem of moral cleansing and purification? so is baptism. Did circumcision point to the remission of sins by the atonement of Christ, and to regeneration and sanctification by the Spirit? so does baptism. Circumcision, all admit, has passed away. It ceased as the gospel was established; but baptism now occupies the same position, means the same thing, seals the same covenant, the same righteousness, and is a pledge of the same spiritual benefits. If baptism be not in the room of circumcision, then we ask, Where is now the initiatory rite of the Church? where is the seal of "the righteousness of faith"? where is the external badge to distinguish the children of Abraham? They are not to be found; and the Church is left with no initiatory rite, no seal of the covenant, no external pledge, confirming to the children of Abraham the gracious promise of the glorious inheritance of the spiritual Canaan.

But it is said by some that "the Abrahamic covenant was only a Jewish grant, and promised only temporal mercies." This position is too unscriptural to be admitted. Adopt this theory, and what becomes of the promise to Abraham—"I will make thee the father of many nations," and "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed"?

Does this language indicate merely temporal mercies to the Jews alone? No, verily; it embodies the great gospel charter of salvation to all the world upon the condition of faith in Christ. We urge the inquiry, What has become of the Abrahamic covenant? Shall we be told that it has passed away with "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," "Christ having nailed it to his cross?" St. Paul hath triumphantly refuted this position. Hear his language: "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise." Gal. iii. 17, 18.

Now, we demand, what is the argument of the apostle here? He was maintaining against the Judaizing teachers that the Gentiles were embraced in the Abrahamic covenant, and consequently were entitled to the privileges of the gospel Church. But how does he reason? Plainly thus: The "covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ" was the covenant with "Abraham," which was confirmed by the "seal of circumcision." This covenant "the law cannot disannul," and why? Because it did not take its existence from the law, but was given "to Abraham four hundred and thirty years" before the giving of the law; and as it did not derive its existence from the law, so neither can it be dependent on the law for the continuance of that existence. The law, with its shadows and ceremonies, may "wax old" and "vanish away," being fulfilled in Christ; but not so the Abrahamic covenant which preceded it. This covenant confirmed unto Abraham and his seed all the rich and endless blessings of the everlasting gospel. Of this covenant, circumcision was the seal up to the coming of Christ. Under the gospel, the seal is changed; circumcision is done away—it now "availeth nothing." But is the covenant disannulled? It stands in all its force; it has lost nothing of its importance and value. The Sinaitic covenant may perish, and with it the peculiar national and temporal immunities of the Jewish people; but while the oath of God stands firm, the Abrahamic covenant shall remain unshaken on its foundation, undiminished in its blessings, and undimmed in its luster. And this is the covenant by which the Church of God originally arose into being; it has been the great unfailing charter of that same Church in all ages, even from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to David, from David to Christ, and shall continue such, not only till the wandering and outcast tribes of God's ancient people shall be brought back with the "fullness of the Gentiles," and all nations shall be blessed in the

Redeemer, but till the consummation of the last achievement of Heaven's redeeming scheme.

If, then, as we are compelled to admit, the Church, as to its essential identity, the covenant, confirming the chartered blessings of salvation, and the promise, securing to believers the heritage of eternal life, all remain unchanged, and these same blessings, once sealed and pledged by *circumcision*, are now sealed and pledged by *baptism*, does it not follow, that *baptism has taken the place of circumcision*?

The argument here presented in favor of infant baptism may be briefly stated thus: The Church of God is essentially the same Church now that it was when God commanded that infants should be admitted into it as members. God has never authorized the repeal of that command; hence it is still in force; consequently, infants are now entitled to membership in the Church. But membership in the Church of God can now only be conferred through the initiatory rite of baptism; therefore, as infants are entitled to Church-membership, they have also a right to baptism.

Again, substantially the same argument may be stated in another form, thus:

The Abrahamic covenant and that of the gospel are the same; God once ordained that all, upon entering upon this covenant relation with him, should receive the *sign* and *seal* of circumcision. What was once confirmed by the sign and seal of circumcision is now by divine appointment confirmed by the sign and seal of baptism; therefore baptism has come in the room of circumcision. Infants by divine appointment had a right to circumcision; but baptism having come in the room of circumcision, therefore they have a right to baptism.

Again, the Church of God is essentially *one* in all ages. God has enacted that infants constitute a part of that one Church, and that enactment has never been repealed; therefore infants are still a part of that Church. All who compose the Church have a right to all its ordinances which they are capable of receiving; but baptism is an ordinance of the Church which infants are capable of receiving; therefore infants have a right to baptism.

IV. We now proceed to examine some plain passages of Scripture found in the *New Testament*, bearing upon the question before us.

The opposers of infant baptism have clamored long and loud for some "*explicit warrant*" for this practice. "Baptism," say they, "is a positive institute, therefore we cannot admit the application of this ordinance to infants without a 'Thus saith the Lord.' Bring us a direct

command from the Bible, or a plain statement of the fact that the apostles baptized infants, and then we will admit them to the ordinance."

Suppose we were to admit that Christ has not, in so many words, explicitly commanded the baptism of infants, and that it is not directly authorized by any unquestionable apostolic example, would the propriety of infant baptism be thereby disproved? Are we to reject from our creed and practice every thing for which we cannot produce an express Scripture warrant? Some observations have already been made on this point, but a few additional remarks seem to be pertinent in this connection. The masterly production of the Rev. Peter Edwards on Baptism, with all who will read it, sets the question here under review forever at rest. He demonstrates most conclusively the fallacy of the Baptists in their reasoning on the subject of "explicit warrant" for infant baptism.

The substance of the reply to this subterfuge of the Baptists may be briefly stated thus:

The argument proves too much; therefore nothing. Any reasoning which proves what all admit to be false must be fallacious, and cannot in fairness be adopted by any party. All concede the propriety of admitting *females* to the communion of the "Lord's-supper," and yet the same argument here urged against infant baptism would most unquestionably exclude them. Female communion is as destitute of any "explicit warrant" from Scripture as infant baptism can be supposed to be, even by its opponents.

Mr. Edwards affirms: "1. That, according to the principles and reasoning of the Baptists, a woman, however qualified, can have no right at all to the Lord's-table. 2. That the Baptists, in opposing infant baptism and defending female communion, do shift their ground, contradict themselves, and prevaricate most pitifully. 3. That, according to their principles and mode of reasoning, God had no Church in this world for at least fifteen hundred years."

We remark that it is admitted by all that both baptism and the Lord's-supper are *positive* institutes; hence it is obvious that any reasoning against infant baptism, founded on the fact that it is a *positive* institute, will be equally applicable to the Lord's-supper. Now we affirm that it is impossible to prove the right of females to the Lord's-supper by "explicit warrant." This never has been, and never *can* be done; yet all admit that they have that right. If, then, they have that right without "explicit warrant," how can we reject infants from baptism, another positive institute, merely for the lack of an "explicit

warrant"? In other words, if the right of infants to baptism and the right of females to communion are both proved by the same mode of reasoning, we cannot, without manifest inconsistency, admit female communion and reject infant baptism. But female communion can only be proved by *inferential* testimony; hence, it follows that, if infant baptism can be proved by a similar kind of testimony, if we admit the one, we must also admit the other.

Although the proof of infant baptism, already presented, or which may yet be exhibited, may not be of that class strictly comprehended by the term "explicit warrant," yet we maintain that it is equally satisfactory and convincing.

1 We now call attention to *our Saviour's language* in reference to infants: "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." (Mark x. 13-16.) Again, we read, "And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me." (Luke ix. 47, 48.) And, again, it is recorded, "And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them; but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." (Luke xviii. 15-17.)

(1) Our first remark in reference to these passages is, that there can be no doubt that these were *real infants* that were brought to Christ; that is, *infants* in regard to age. This is plain from the fact that our Lord "took them up in his arms."

(2) To receive one *in the name of Christ* is to receive him as belonging to Christ—as in covenant relation and visible union with him—as a member of that body, or Church, of which he is the head.

(3) The phrase, "kingdom of God," here evidently means the Church of God on earth, and not the heavenly state. This is clear from the fact that it cannot be said of all children that they are members of the Church in heaven; for they might live to maturity, die in their sins, and

perish everlastingly. Hence, children are here recognized as members of the gospel Church on earth by our Lord himself.

(4) The phrase "*of such is the kingdom of God,*" or "*of heaven,*" as St. Matthew records it (Matt. xix. 13-15), cannot, as some suppose, mean merely that "the kingdom of heaven" is composed of persons of a child-like disposition. Such construction would reduce our Lord's reasoning to nonsense; for how can the fact that adults of a child-like disposition are members of the Church, or belong to the "kingdom of heaven," furnish any reason why children—*infants*—should be brought to Christ for his blessing? But if infants have a covenant relation to Christ, as connected with his gospel Church on earth, then there is propriety in saying: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The reason for suffering infants to come to Christ must not be found in others, but in the *infants themselves*; for the Saviour has placed it there.

(5) As it is manifest, according to the most obvious construction of our Saviour's language, that he here recognizes infants as connected with the gospel Church, it follows that they are entitled to baptism.

2. *St. Paul affirms* that "*all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*" (1 Cor. x. 1, 2.)

We readily admit that the baptism here spoken of by the apostle was not the *Christian* baptism, distinctively so called; yet it was a *scriptural* baptism, so recognized by the inspired apostle. Turn now to Exodus, the twelfth chapter, and you will find that these "*fathers*" who were "*baptized unto Moses,*" embraced "*six hundred thousand men, beside children, and a mixed multitude.*" These "*children,*" of course, embraced children of all ages—*infants*, as well as older children; for the Israelites took all their households with them. Here, then, we have recorded in the New Testament one clear *example* of infant baptism. The fact cannot be denied. We do not, however, rely upon this example of infant baptism as furnishing our proof of that ordinance in the Christian Church; we only refer to it as a refutation of the oft-repeated boast that there is no example of infant baptism recorded in the Bible.

3. We know not how to construe our *Lord's grand commission* to his apostles without finding in it an express *command* to baptize infants. This commission has been more than once quoted for different purposes. We will not here repeat it. It is enough to say that in this commission the apostles are commanded to "*disciple and baptize all nations.*" That the word *μαθητεύσατε*, here rendered "*teach,*" means to "*proselyte,*" or to "*disciple,*" no scholar will deny. As the text is rendered in our ver-

sion, Matthew is made to be guilty of a tautology inconsistent with his character as a writer. Christ is said to command the apostles to "teach all nations;" and then, in the next verse, to repeat the same command, "teaching them," etc. In the Greek of this text there is no tautology. In the nineteenth verse, the word used by the apostle means, as we have said, "*disciple* all nations," or make *proselytes* of them. In the twentieth verse Matthew does not use the same word he had used in the nineteenth verse, but διδάσχοντες, from διδάσκω, to *teach*. The import of the command is, "Go *disciple* all nations;" but how? Plainly, by first "baptizing them;" and then, as they may be able to receive it, "teaching them," etc.

Now, the question with which we are directly concerned is this: Are *infants* included as a part of the "all nations" here mentioned? Most assuredly, we reply, they are; for it takes both sexes, all classes, all conditions, and all ages, to constitute the nation. But the apostles were commanded to "baptize *all nations*," and *infants* are a part of "all nations;" therefore, the apostles were commanded to *baptize infants*.

The logical conclusion here arrived at cannot be escaped by entering the plea that, "as infants are incapable of being *taught*, hence they ought not to be baptized." It would be fallacious reasoning to argue that because there are impediments in the way of executing *one* command, therefore it is wrong to obey *another* command in the way of which there are no impediments.

The apostles could neither "go into all the world" *at once*, nor "preach to every creature" *at once*. There were impediments in the way. The plain, common-sense construction is this: all divine commands, and all parts of the apostles' commission, should be obeyed just as soon and as fully as the nature and circumstances of the case admit. No impediment in reference to *one* duty can release from obligation in reference to *another*.

How, we ask, may we reasonably suppose the apostles would understand this commission? They were all Jews, strongly prejudiced in favor of the religion and customs of their nation. For centuries past that people had been familiar with a religion whose uniform polity, and that too originating in divine appointment, had recognized *infants* with their parents as members of the Church—the only Church God had ever organized in the world. They were familiar also with the custom of inducting Gentile proselytes—the *children*, with their parents—into the Church by the same sacred rite. How, then, we repeat, would they naturally construe the terms of their commission? Would they ever dream that they were to "*disciple*" *only the adult* portion of "all na-

tions"? Had they been told that *children* were no longer to dwell with their parents in covenant and Church relation to God, would not their Jewish training and prejudice have revolted at the idea?

That the apostles could have understood their mission as not including the *infants* as a part of the "nations," we believe to be a moral impossibility. If this be so, the Saviour knew it when he gave the commission; then it will follow either that Christ intentionally deceived the apostles, or he gave them authority to "disciple," or admit into Church relation the *infants* of believing parents. The former supposition is impossible, therefore the latter must be true; and if so, we cannot escape the conclusion that we have here a divine command for the *baptism of the infant children of believing parents*.

5. We now notice the proceedings of the apostles in the *execution of their commission*.

In his sermon at Pentecost, St. Peter opened the gospel kingdom to the Jews. After having instructed his convicted hearers to "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," promising them "the gift of the Holy Ghost," he gives, as a reason for their compliance, the following fact: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts ii. 38, 39.)

We now inquire, does this passage contain any intimation that infants are to be recognized as sustaining any connection with the gospel Church? That we may understand this text, we must know to what promise the apostle refers. As a clue to this inquiry, we remark that it must be some promise in which, *first*, the *Jews and their children* were specially interested; *secondly*, it must be some promise in which the *Gentiles* were also interested, and to which they were to be *called*. Where shall we find such a promise?

The Baptists, to escape the consequence that would result to their system by the admission that the apostle here referred to the great promise connected with the Abrahamic covenant, have entered the plea that the allusion of St. Peter, in this place, is *exclusively* to the promise of Joel ii. 28, 29, which he had quoted in the commencement of his discourse. It is true that, so far as the effusion of the Holy Spirit is concerned, the promise of Joel had already been referred to as recording the prediction whose fulfillment had just been witnessed. But in the thirty-ninth verse the apostle refers to a promise, not to explain the fact of the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost, but to encourage his convicted and distressed hearers to "repent and be baptized." The word "for," in the commencement of the thirty-ninth verse, connects directly,

not with the promise of Joel, but with the preceding verse, "Repent and be baptized," etc. Why should they "repent and be baptized?" "For (*γὰρ*—*because*) the promise is unto *you*, and to *your children*, and to all that are *afar off*, even as many as the Lord our God *shall call*."

It is most certain that the direct reference of the apostle must have been to some other promise than that of Joel; for he (Joel) refers only to adults, while Peter says "to *you*," adults, and to "*your children*." The inspired apostle could not have blundered. He must have referred to a promise containing all the items included in his specifications. If no such promise could be found, we should certainly be puzzled to vindicate the accuracy of the apostle's quotation; but as it is, nothing but blinded prejudice in favor of a theory can hide from our view the promise in question.

After reading the language of Peter in this place, we have only to turn to Genesis, the seventeenth chapter, and beginning at the seventh verse, we may find the noted promise quoted by the apostle in almost the exact words, and embracing the specifications in full. St. Peter says, "unto *you* and to *your children*." The promise reads (Gen. xvii. 7), "To be a God unto *thee* and unto *thy seed* after thee." There is here a complete harmony in phraseology. In the one we read, "unto *thee* and *thy seed*;" in the other, "unto *you* and to *your children*." But there is not only a correspondence in *terms*, but also in subject-matter; each refers to the great covenant of grace, and also to a rite of initiation into the Church under that covenant. In the one that rite was circumcision; in the other, baptism.

Look at the circumstances of the speaker and hearers on this memorable occasion, and how is it possible that either the one or the others could have understood these terms—"thee and thy seed," "*you* and *your children*"—in any other sense than that of implying *parents* and their *infants*? That the words in Genesis, where the promise is issued, embraced *infants*, Baptists themselves will not deny; and if so, Peter could not have quoted that promise in so nearly the exact words, and then change it in its import in a matter so sacred to the heart of every Jew as was the covenant Church relation of his children, without a word of comment concerning that change, or even an intimation that it had been made. And stranger still is the hypothesis that that prejudiced and bigoted people, who were ever ready to "wrangle for a rite, quarrel for a fast, and almost fight for a new moon," could have so quiescently witnessed the excision of their infant children from the covenant Church of God, and yet not a murmur from their lips be heard on the subject, either at Pentecost, when Peter first announced baptism as the rite of

initiation under the new dispensation, or at any time subsequently, amid all their Judaizing clamors! The supposition is incredible. Then, we demand, do we not here find, in the words of the apostle, a satisfactory *Scripture warrant* for infant baptism?

If it be contended that "the promise here is not to *infant* children, but only to adult posterity," to this we reply that such a construction is contradicted by the fact in the case. The Jews always understood it as applying to their infants at eight days old, and practiced upon it accordingly for centuries.

Again, if it be said that "the latter clause of St. Peter's address—'even as many as the Lord our God shall call'—limits the promise exclusively to the 'called,' and consequently it could not embrace infants," to this we reply that the apostle makes no such limit. Those whom he addressed were the actually "called." In reference to *them* he says, "the promise is to *you*." But he does not stop; he goes on—"and to *your children*;" that is, the children of those addressed. The plain construction of the language is this: "The promise is unto *you* and to *your children*, and to all that are afar off," and to *their children*, "even as many as the Lord our God shall call," and to *their children*.

The promise was, unquestionably, that embraced in the Abrahamic covenant, extending the gospel tender of salvation to the Gentiles who were "afar off," and who were to be "called," with *their children*, into communion and covenant fellowship with the Jews and *their children*, in the bosom of that same original Church of God, from which the Jews, as a nation, for their unbelief, were now to be "broken off," as unfruitful "branches" of the "good olive-tree."

Therefore we have the most indubitable evidence from the passage under review that infants, under the new economy, are placed in the same relation to baptism as they were to circumcision under the old. The language of Peter is almost precisely the same as that of the promise referred to in Genesis. In the one place the promise is connected with circumcision, and all who shared the promise received the rite. In the other place, the promise is connected with baptism, and all who share the promise *should* receive the rite. But infants are connected with the promise in both instances; and from Abraham up to Christ they shared, with their parents, the rite of circumcision. Hence it is clear that, as infants are still, as much as ever, connected with the same covenant promise, they are entitled to Christian baptism.

6. The baptism of several *households*, under the apostolic administration, will, when the several instances are closely examined, furnish strong ground for believing that the apostles baptized the children with the

parents, upon the conversion of the latter. In the cases of "household" baptism recorded, we do not claim that there were *certainly* infants in any of those families. There may or may not have been, so far as we have any direct evidence. We think it probable that there were. But what we *do* claim in reference to this subject is, that the apostles seem to have acted upon the principle that parents were to bring their children with them into the Church, according to the long-established Jewish practice.

The first case of this kind to which we refer, is that of Lydia and her household. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which *worshiped God*, *heard* us; whose heart the Lord opened, that *she attended* unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged *me to be faithful* to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." (Acts xvi. 14, 15.)

In this brief account notice several particulars:

1. "Lydia" and "her household" were baptized.
2. Various particulars are specified in reference to the piety and conversion of Lydia. *She "worshiped God," she "heard" the apostles, "the Lord opened" her "heart," she "attended unto the things spoken," she said, "If ye have judged me to be faithful," etc.*
3. There is not one word in reference to the piety or conversion of Lydia's household.

Now, if her "household" consisted of adults, why so many items about *her* conversion, and not a syllable in reference to the conversion of her "household"? Admit that her household were *children* who were baptized on the faith of their parent, and all is natural and easy; otherwise it is inexplicable.

Another case of household baptism is that of the *jailer* and his house. (Acts xvi. 30-35.)

1. When the jailer, convicted and trembling, inquired, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" the apostle replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." No intimation that *faith* was required of his *house*. How natural this, if the apostle intended that his *children* were to be admitted to the Church by baptism on the faith of their father! But if his *house* consisted of adults who were to act for themselves, the language seems inappropriate, and not sufficiently explicit for the occasion.
2. The jailer "was baptized, *he and all his*, straightway." Yet there is not a word about faith being required of any but the jailer. If it be objected that the apostle spoke the word to "all that were in the house," and that the jailer "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house," hence they were all adults, to this

we reply, although it be admitted that there were adult members of the "house" who *heard* the word and "rejoiced, believing in God," in company with the jailer, yet this does not necessarily exclude *infants* from being also embraced in the "house," and being baptized. It is not said that none received baptism, but such as *heard, believed, and rejoiced*. The record of the baptism is in a separate verse, and simply states that the jailer "was baptized, he *and all his*, straightway." Here there is no restriction of baptism to such as *believed*. Nor is there any proof that all the "house" believed. It cannot be disputed that the phrase translated, "and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house," might have been more accurately rendered thus, "and he, believing in God, rejoiced with (or over) all his house." Hence, there is still no proof that all the "house" were adults; but there is explicit testimony that the jailer *and all his* were baptized.

Several other "household" baptisms are mentioned in the New Testament; but enough has been said to show that the style of the apostles, in speaking of the baptism of *parents* and their *households*, is perfectly natural, and such as we might reasonably expect, if they proceeded on the principle of receiving *children* with their parents into the Church; but if otherwise, the apostles' account of their own administration was well calculated to mislead the Jewish mind.

V. The historical argument for infant baptism we consider entirely conclusive and satisfactory.

Tertullian, who lived about two hundred years after the birth of Christ, is the first man of whom Church-history furnishes any account who, in any shape, opposed infant baptism. But when we notice his reasons for opposing it, his opposition is an argument rather *for* than *against* it. He had imbibed the superstitious notion that "baptism was accompanied with the remission of all past sins, and that sins committed after baptism were peculiarly dangerous." On this ground, and *this alone*, he advises the postponement of baptism, not only in the case of infants, but also in that of young persons generally, and even young widowers and widows, till they advance to a mature and settled state of life, beyond the period of youthful passion and temptation; and numbers who embraced the same error actually deferred their baptism till old age or a death-bed.

The next opponents of infant baptism of whom we hear were the followers of *Peter de Bruis*, in France, about twelve hundred years after Christ. These were an inconsiderable fraction of the Albigenses, who had departed from the faith of that body. But they opposed infant baptism on the ground that they considered infants incapable of salvation.

The next society of Anti-pedobaptists, and, indeed, the *first* who advocated the tenets of modern Baptists on the subject, arose in Germany, in the sixteenth century; thus it appears that for at least fifteen hundred years there was no society of Christians heard of who opposed infant baptism on the ground of its wanting apostolic authority.

On the other hand, the positive testimony for infant baptism is indubitable.

Origen, a Greek father of the third century, speaks as follows: "According to the usage of the Church, baptism is given even to *infants*, when, if there were nothing in infants which needed forgiveness, the grace of baptism would seem to be superfluous."

Again, "For this cause it was that the Church received an order from the apostles to give baptism even to *infants*."

Cyprian, a Latin father of the third century, presided over a council of sixty-six bishops, held at Carthage. Fidus, a country pastor, inquired of this council, not whether infant baptism was proper, but whether, as in circumcision, it ought to be always deferred till the child was eight days old? The following is Cyprian's reply: "Cyprian, and the rest of the bishops who were present in the council, sixty-six in number, to Fidus, our brother, greeting: As to the case of infants—whereas you judge that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born, and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, that no one should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born, we were all in the council of a very different opinion. As for what you thought proper to be done, no one was of your mind; but we all rather judged that the mercy and grace of God is to be denied to no human being that is born. This, therefore, dear brother, was our opinion in the council: that we ought not to hinder any person from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful and kind to us all. And this rule, as it holds for all, we think more especially to be observed in reference to infants, even to those newly born." (Cyprian, Epist. 66.) Here, then, we have the unanimous decision of a council of sixty-six bishops, not mooting the question whether infant baptism was the universal practice of the Church (that is taken for granted), but whether it is necessary to postpone it till the eighth day.

Chrysostom, a Greek father of the fourth century, speaks of infant baptism thus: "But our circumcision—I mean the grace of *baptism*—has no determinate time as that (meaning circumcision) had, but one that is in the *very beginning of his age*, or one that is in the middle of it, or one that is in his old age, may receive this circumcision *made without hands*." (Hom. 40, in Genesin.)

Augustin, one of the most learned men of his time, who flourished a little more than three centuries after the apostles, had a controversy with Pelagius, a very learned heretic, about original sin. Origen wrote to Pelagius thus: "Why are infants baptized for the remission of sins if they have no sin?" To which Pelagius replies thus: "Baptism ought to be administered to infants with the same sacramental words which are used in the case of adult persons." "Men slander me as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants." "I never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants; for who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized?"

Again, Augustin, referring to the Pelagians, says: "Since they grant that infants must be baptized, as not being able to resist the authority of *the whole Church*, which was doubtless delivered by *our Lord and his apostles*, they must grant that they stand in need of the benefit of the Mediator." Again, he remarks, "The custom of our mother-Church in baptizing infants must not be disregarded, nor accounted needless, nor believed to be any thing else than an ordinance *delivered to us from the apostles*."

Here, then, is Augustin, familiar with the writings of all the fathers before him, a man of unsurpassed erudition in his day, and Pelagius, a man of great talents and learning, who had enriched his mind with information gathered from extensive travel—these men both testify that they never *saw or heard* of one, whether Christian or heretic, who denied the baptism of infants! They lived only about three hundred years after Christ. Can it be that they were ignorant as to the facts, or that they designedly deceived the world? And if not, what, but the most invincible prejudice, can prevent any one from believing that infant baptism had been the universal practice of the Church from the days of the apostles?

We have presented, from Church-history, but a brief outline of the testimony that might be adduced in favor of infant baptism; but to the unprejudiced mind we think it amounts to evidence of the most conclusive and satisfactory character. To our mind it carries irresistible conviction. In three centuries from the apostles' time, many changes had occurred in the Church—many abuses had entered—but that so important and so serious a change as the introduction of infant baptism should have been made so soon, and become the universal practice of the Church, and yet no one ever hear, or read, or speak of the marvelous revolution is utterly incredible.

In the language of an excellent writer (Dr. Miller), we add, that 'when Origen, Cyprian, and Chrysostom, declare not only that the bap-

tism of infants was the universal and unopposed practice of the Church in their respective times and places of residence; and when men of so much acquaintance with all preceding writers, and so much knowledge of all Christendom, as Augustin and Pelagius, declared that they *never heard of any one who claimed to be a Christian, either orthodox or heretic, who did not maintain and practice infant baptism*—to suppose, in the face of such testimony, that the practice of infant baptism crept in as an unwarranted innovation between their time and that of the apostles, without the smallest notice of the change having ever reached their ears, I must be allowed to say, of all incredible suppositions, this is one of the most incredible. He who can believe this must, it appears to me, be prepared to make a sacrifice of all historical evidence at the shrine of blind and deaf prejudice."

But infant baptism can well afford to dispense with all this historic testimony, and its foundation remain firm and unshaken. It grounds its authority upon the appointment of God, in connection with the everlasting covenant with "Abraham and his seed," and the explicit law of God, embracing infants as members of his Church. The same Church still exists—the same law was never annulled. But Christ and his apostles fully recognized both the real identity of the Church and the right of infants, under the new dispensation, to share the benefits of the same abiding covenant of grace. The promise and oath of God can never fail; and while these remain unchanged, infants, with their believing parents, shall ever share in all the rights, privileges, and benefits of the glorious kingdom of Him in whom "all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

* QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. Should we reject every thing in religion for which we cannot find an express precept?</p> <p>2 What kind of testimony is often as satisfactory as direct proof?</p> <p>3. How can it be shown that infants, by express command of God, were admitted into his Church?</p> <p>4. How can it be proved that the Abrahamic covenant and the gospel covenant are the same?</p> <p>5. How can it be proved by the testimony of Christ that the gospel Church and that established in the family of Abraham are the same?</p> <p>6. And how by the testimony of St. Paul?</p> <p>7. How can it be proved that baptism came in the room of circumcision?</p> <p>8 Wherein do these two rites agree, and wherein do they differ?</p> <p>9 Of what was circumcision the sign and seal?</p> | <p>10. And of what is baptism the sign and seal?</p> <p>11. How is it proved that the Abrahamic covenant did not pass away with the Mosaic ritual?</p> <p>12. How is it shown that infant baptism necessarily follows from the admission of the identity of the Abrahamic Church with that of the gospel?</p> <p>13. What is the argument from our Saviour's language in reference to infants?</p> <p>14. How is it proved that infants were baptized unto Moses?</p> <p>15. How is infant baptism proved from the apostolic commission?</p> <p>16. And how from Peter's language on the day of Pentecost?</p> <p>17. And how from household baptisms?</p> <p>18. And how from Church-history?</p> <p>19. Is the argument from Scripture alone conclusive and satisfactory?</p> |
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CHAPTER XIV.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM—ITS MODE.

Is IMMERSION *the only proper mode of Christian baptism?* Upon this question there has been much unprofitable controversy. For several centuries past there has been known in the history of the Church a sect called Anabaptists, Anti-pedobaptists, or Baptists, who have strenuously contended that *immersion* is essential to baptism; and have closed the door of their communion against all unimmersed Christians, refusing to recognize any such as members of the visible Church of Christ. But for the fact that a portion of professed Christians have carried their views upon this subject to such an extreme as necessarily to produce a painful and pernicious schism in the body of Christ, we would deem the discussion of this question of scarcely more importance than that of the attitude of the body in the Lord's-supper, or in public prayer. We are free to admit that, while the advocates of exclusive immersion have often transcended the bounds of Christian charity, not to say republican toleration, in their ridicule and denunciation of all who believe and practice differently from them on the subject of baptism, there has sometimes been exhibited too much stringency and sectarian bias on the opposite side.

It is difficult to account for the fierce and long-continued conflict that has been waged upon the *mode* of baptism without coming to the conclusion that it is one of those minor questions connected with theological polemics, concerning which divine inspiration has not seen proper to furnish us *explicit* and *positive* testimony. Believing as we do on this question, we must admire the profound wisdom and Christian charity of the Discipline of our own Church on the *mode* of baptism: "Let every adult person and the parents of every child to be baptized have the choice either of immersion, sprinkling, or pouring." We think it must be admitted by the candid and unprejudiced mind that, after close and thorough investigation, no *explicit* and *positive* testimony can be found in the Scriptures prescribing either *immersion*, *sprinkling*, or *pouring*, as the *only proper mode* of water baptism. We may find a

large preponderance of *probable* or *presumptive* evidence in favor of *one* particular mode derived from facts, circumstances, analogies, allusions, etc.; and this may rationally satisfy the mind, and give to *one* mode a decided preference, but we cannot find positive and undoubted proof that either immersion, sprinkling, or pouring, is *the only proper mode* for the administration of the ordinance.

The limits of this work will not allow us to aim at any thing farther than a presentation of a concise view of the subject in reference to its prominent features. Extended as has been this controversy, the Scripture arguments, *pro* and *con*, may all be derived from the following sources:

1. From the *meaning of the Greek words* used to express baptism.
2. From the *Scripture instances* of baptism.
3. From Scripture *allusions* to baptism.

I. The word employed in the Greek Testament to express the action of baptism is βαπτίζω, which comes from the root βάπτω. It is contended by immersionists that these words and their derivatives used in Scripture for baptism always express *immersion*, and can never signify *sprinkling* or *pouring*. On the other hand, Pedobaptists maintain that the words in question, though they frequently do express *immersion*, yet often signify *sprinkling* or *pouring*. From this it is clear that, if either party could establish their own position to the satisfaction of their opponents, the controversy would be ended; for the positions here assumed by the respective parties are perfectly conclusive on the question when satisfactorily sustained. Observe, the point at issue is not whether baptism means *immersion*, or whether immersion is its *primary* meaning; but is immersion the *only* meaning of baptism?

To decide this question, so far as the words referred to in the Greek Testament are concerned, an array of Greek lexicons has been paraded. Scapula, Hedericus, Schleusner, Schrevelius, Parkhurst, Suidas, Wahl, Robinson, Groves, Greenfield, Donnegan, and others, have been quoted. The immersionists have very satisfactorily proved by the testimony of all these witnesses that βαπτίζω means *to immerse*, and by several of them that *to immerse* is its primary meaning; but this has not ended the dispute. Indeed, as contended by Pedobaptists, the point at issue has not yet been reached. We farther inquire of these witnessing lexicons whether βαπτίζω has any other meaning besides immersion. They all respond in harmony: "Yes, it has several meanings." What are they? we demand. Several of them speak at once: "*It means to wash, to wet, to moisten, to dye, to tinge, to purify, to cleanse, to sprinkle.*" We noticed, as these witnesses were deposing, that a few remained silent

while *some* of the definitions were pronounced; but in uttering the definition "*to wash*," every voice was heard in full and perfect harmony. "Enough!" cried the Pedobaptist, "it means *to wash*. You all agree in this; then it cannot always mean *to immerse*."

Allow us to add that a moment's reflection will show that *to immerse* expresses a *specific* action which cannot be performed by *pouring* or *sprinkling*, but *to wash* expresses a *generic* action which may be performed alike by *immersion*, *pouring*, or *sprinkling*; hence we conclude that, as all the lexicons agree that the Greek word βαπτίζω not only means *to immerse* but also *to wash*, and as *washing* may properly be performed by *sprinkling* or *pouring* as well as by *immersion*, therefore we can derive no evidence from the mere import of the Greek term used in the New Testament for that ordinance that *immersion* is the *only proper mode* of administering it.

It should also be remembered, in connection with this etymological argument, that there are several places in the New Testament in which the Greek word for baptize and its derivatives cannot mean immersion.

"And when they come from the market, except they *wash*, they eat not." Mark vii. 4. Here the word rendered "*wash*" is βαπτίζονται—*baptize*—a variation of βαπτίζω. Who believes that the Jews immersed themselves habitually before eating? "And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that he had not first *washed* before dinner." Luke xi. 38. Here the word for "*washed*" is ἐβαπτίσθη, from βαπτίζω. Surely no one supposes that the Pharisee expected our Lord to *immerse* himself, but simply to *wash* his hands.

The fact that the "baptism of the Holy Ghost" was unquestionably performed, not by *immersion*, but by *pouring*, as we shall fully show in its proper place, is an unanswerable refutation of the position that βαπτίζω always means *immersion*, and nothing else.

II. We proceed to notice some of the *Scripture instances of baptism*.

1. First, we call attention to the baptism of the "fathers unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," spoken of by St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 1, 2). On turning to the account of this baptism, as recorded by Moses, we find that, when the Israelites crossed the sea, it was on "dry land"—they passed over it upon "dry ground;" hence the notion that they were there and then immersed is utterly preposterous. In what mode, then, could they have been baptized? If we had no clue to the solution of this question farther than the Mosaic history, we might feel that we were involved in perplexity. But how admirably does one scripture often explain another! The Prophet Asaph has left us a comment

on the record of Moses. He explains that "the clouds poured out water" upon the Israelites as they crossed the Red Sea (Ps. lxxvii. 17); hence, whatever may be our conclusion as to the mode of *Christian* baptism, it is certain that this *Mosaic* baptism was administered by *pouring*. Such is the testimony of the Bible; for "the clouds poured out water;" and this demonstrates also that baptism does not always mean immersion. We may conjecture and speculate as much as we please about "the clouds being above the Israelites, and the sea, as walls, on each side enveloping them, as it were, in an immersion;" but still the Scripture affirms that they were on "dry ground," and that they were baptized by *pouring*. From these facts there is no escape. Surely, to find immersion in this case will exhibit a wonderful feat of imagination.

2. "*The baptism of John*" is also appealed to by immersionists as furnishing proof that there is no proper baptism but immersion.

The argument is this: "John baptized *in* Jordan, and also *in* Enon near to Salim, because there was *much water* there;" hence it is concluded he must have baptized by immersion.

That the Greek preposition *ἐν*, here translated *in*, always means *in* will not be contended. It may mean *at*, *by*, *with*, or *near to*; and the context must determine the sense. In Matthew iii. 6, it is said that John "baptized *in* Jordan;" but in the eleventh verse of the same chapter, John says: "I indeed baptize you *with* water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, . . . he shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost." Here the same preposition *ἐν* is used both before "water" and "Holy Ghost," and our translators have rendered the preposition, in both instances, *with* instead of *in*; hence nothing as to the *mode* can be proved by the preposition. But an argument of much force may be derived from the manner in which John connects his *water* baptism with our Saviour's baptism of the *Holy Ghost*. These baptisms are here presented in such connection that, in the absence of proof to the contrary, to conclude that both were not administered in the same *mode* would be most unwarranted. But the baptism of the Holy Ghost was unquestionably performed by *pouring*; therefore the rational inference is that John baptized in the same way. As the disciples were not dipped, plunged, or immersed, into the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost descended or *fell upon them*, even so we may conclude that John did not dip, plunge, or immerse, the multitudes into the water, but that he poured or sprinkled the water upon them. As in the baptism of the Holy Ghost the influence descended upon or was applied to the subjects, even so, if there is any analogy in the case, in

the baptism of John the water, or element, was applied to the subject of baptism, and not the subject to the element.

In John i. 28, we read: "These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing." Here the same preposition *ἐν* is used before "Bethabara;" but Bethabara was not a river, but a house—the word means a house of passage—and that house was not in the River Jordan, but "beyond Jordan." Now if *ἐν* before Jordan proves that John baptized in Jordan, and therefore must have immersed, according to the same logic, *ἐν* before Bethabara would prove that John baptized in a house, and therefore not by immersion. The truth is, the preposition proves nothing on either side as to the mode. The true sense of the preposition here is probably *at*, or *near to*; and then John baptized *at* or *near to* Jordan, and *at* or *near to* Bethabara. The probability is that Bethabara was the house at which he made his home while baptizing, and that he selected a position thus contiguous to the River Jordan for the convenient accommodation of the great multitudes of people and their beasts, and that he baptized them in the house, in the yard, in the neighborhood, "in the wilderness," or *at*, or *near to*, or in the river, as circumstances might render it convenient.

But it is said John baptized "in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." "Enon" signifies the fountain of On—a mere spring, sending forth a rivulet; or probably such springs were numerous in that vicinity; for the words, *ὕδατα πολλά*, rendered "much water," mean many waters—that is, there were many springs, or rivulets, in that region. This was necessary for the comfort of the multitudes, by whatever mode they may have been baptized. And as "much water," or many waters, would have been a comfort and convenience sufficient to induce John to select that locality as the theater of his operations, independently of immersion, or even of baptism in any form, surely it must be very inconsequential reasoning to infer from this fact alone that John immersed. So far as the text is concerned, he may or may not have immersed.

But an overwhelming proof of immersion, in the estimation of Baptists, is found in the record of our Lord's baptism by John: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." Matt. iii. 16.

The whole argument for the immersion of our Saviour in this passage depends upon the meaning of the Greek preposition *ἀπὸ*, here rendered "out of." Now it cannot be denied that the primary meaning of *ἀπὸ* is from instead of "out of," and that, in very many instances, it is so translated in the New Testament; thus: "A certain man went down (*ἀπὸ*) from Jerusalem." Luke x. 30.

"When he was come down (*ἀπὸ*) from the mountain." Matt. viii. 1. Our Saviour *may* have been immersed, for any thing we *certainly know* to the contrary; but nothing can be more fallacious than the attempt to prove it by this passage. "Coming up *from* the water," would be the most literal and natural translation.

But if there was any connection between the baptism of water and the descent of the Holy Ghost immediately following it, *this* would furnish an argument against immersion; for the Saviour was not immersed into the Holy Spirit, but the "Spirit of God" was seen "descending like a dove, and lighting upon him."

3. The *Pentecostal baptism* is the next instance to which we refer.

But here we find a twofold baptism—that of *water*, and that of the *Holy Ghost*. The latter, being not only the first in importance, but, in this instance, the first in occurrence, shall be first considered.

(1) John says of Christ: "He shall baptize you with the *Holy Ghost*, and with fire." Matt. iii. 11. Before his ascension, our Lord said to his apostles: "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts i. 5. In the second chapter of The Acts we find the record of this glorious baptism; but by what *mode* was it administered? This is the question now before us.

St. Peter testifies on the occasion, saying: "This is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will *pour out of my Spirit* upon all flesh." Again, he adds: "He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." And, in speaking of the descent of the Holy Ghost on that occasion, St. Luke records that "it *sat upon* each of them." In speaking of the baptism of the Holy Ghost at the house of Cornelius, St. Peter says: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost *fell on them, as on us at the beginning*. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." Acts xi. 15, 16. In giving the history of this baptism, St. Luke uses the same form of words: "The Holy Ghost *fell on all them which heard the word*." Acts x. 44.

We here find several forms of speech used expressive of the mode in which baptism was administered: the Holy Ghost "*sat upon them*," it was "*poured out*" upon them, and it "*fell on them*." It is never once intimated that they were *dipped*, *plunged*, or *immersed*, into the Holy Ghost. Indeed, it is certain that this baptism was not by *immersion*, but by *pouring*. This is the united testimony of the Prophet Joel, of St. Luke, and of the Apostle Peter. It is one of the striking exhibitions of the strange power of prejudice in favor of a darling theory,

that any man of common understanding, with these palpable Scripture proofs before his eyes, can have the temerity to stand up and contend that this baptism was administered by immersion. And how passing strange must we view the fact that, after perusing this combination of inspired testimony, setting forth, as explicitly as it is in the power of language to do, that this baptism was performed by *pouring*, some persons without a blush can attempt to argue that "baptism always means *immersion*, and can mean nothing else!"

We are apprised of but two methods resorted to by immersionists to ward off the force of the argument we have just presented.

First, an effort is made to prove that the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost was an immersion, because the "*sound* filled all the house" where the disciples "were sitting;" hence it is argued that, as the *sound* filled the house, and as the disciples were in the house, therefore they were immersed in the sound. This plea is rendered perfectly ridiculous when it is remembered that the disciples were not said to be baptized with the *sound*, but with the *Holy Ghost*. Surely the *sound* was not the *Holy Ghost*. The *sound* filled the house, but the *Holy Ghost* "sat upon" the disciples; hence this effort to prove immersion only exhibits the desperate shifts to which the advocates of an erroneous theory may be driven.

Secondly, failing to prove immersion by an argument founded on the fact that the sound filled the house, the next effort is to set imagination to work to conjure up a kind of figurative immersion. We are told that "the apostles were so entirely overwhelmed and surrounded by the influence of the Holy Ghost, which came so abundantly upon them that it might be called an immersion." Wonderful logic! That is, the *pouring out* of the Spirit was so abundant that it was not *poured* at all; the disciples were dipped, plunged, or immersed into it. The plain truth is that the Scriptures, in so many words, declare that the "baptism of the Holy Ghost" was performed by *pouring*. We may imagine and explain as much as we please, but it would certainly be wiser, as well as more modest, to suspect that our theory may be wrong than flatly to contradict the Bible.

(2) We next notice the Pentecostal baptism of *water*. All we learn of this baptism we derive, first, from the fact that Peter commanded them to "repent and be baptized," connecting therewith the "gift" or baptism "of the Holy Ghost;" secondly, the historian informs us that "they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

It is admitted that there is no *positive* proof here *against* immersion;

but it must also be admitted that there is no proof of any kind what ever *for* it. But we think there are, in the circumstances connected with this baptism, several strong presumptive arguments *against* immersion.

Look at the intimate manner in which water baptism is connected with that of the Holy Ghost—the *one* promised upon the condition of the proper reception of the *other*, and then following it in immediate succession. Remember, farther, how constantly water is used in both Testaments as an emblem of cleansing, or moral purification. Look upon these facts, and who can help believing that the water of baptism is an emblem, or sign, of that moral cleansing effected by the influence of the Holy Ghost? But if water baptism is an emblem of spiritual baptism, would we not, in the absence of proof to the contrary, expect both to be administered in the same mode? That the baptism of the Holy Ghost was not by immersion, but by pouring, is put beyond a doubt; therefore the reasonable conclusion is that water baptism was administered in the same way.

Again, look at the shortness of the time allowed for this baptism, and all the circumstances connected with it, and the probabilities will appear greatly against the mode of immersion. From the third hour of the day, or nine o'clock in the forenoon, to the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon, was all the time that could have been allowed for both the preaching and the baptizing; for three in the afternoon was the settled hour for the regular public prayer. At this the apostles attended, and we may be assured that this great solemnity was not neglected on this occasion. Not more than six hours, then, could have been occupied by the wonderful events recorded in the second chapter of The Acts. Peter preached a long discourse, using "many other words" beside what we have on record. The other apostles also preached to the thronging crowds. Fifteen nations are named, who all heard the gospel, "every man in his own tongue, wherein he was born." After this, time must be allowed for each convert to make his confession to the satisfaction of the apostles; then the believers must be separated from the multitude; the place for immersion must be sought out; permission must be obtained to use that place—pool, pond, river, or whatever it was. Taking all the difficulties of the case into the account (many more than we have taken time to name), is it probable that the apostles could have immersed the "three thousand" in so short a time? or, if they could, is it reasonable to suppose that all the necessary arrangement, preparation, marching to the place of immersion, etc., would occur, and no account be taken of it? And yet we hear not one word

in regard to the immersion, the preparation, the place, or any thing else about it; and why this silence about a matter that must have produced a great commotion? The most rational conclusion is, that no immersion was performed, but that the apostles sprinkled the people, or poured the water, after the manner of Jewish priestly purification, and in the easiest and most convenient method. That these "three thousand" were then and there immersed involves too many improbabilities to be accredited without evidence, but of *that* there is none; hence we conclude that this baptism can furnish us no proof of immersion.

4. The baptism of *the Ethiopian eunuch* has generally been relied on by immersionists as one of their most conclusive proofs on the subject.

"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." Acts viii. 36-39.

The evidence here claimed for immersion is based entirely upon the expressions—"they went *down into the water*," and "when they were *come up out of the water*."

If the Greek preposition *εἰς*, here rendered "into," and *ἐκ*, rendered "out of," do not imply immersion, it is plain we can find no proof of that mode in this text. It will not be contended that *εἰς* always means *into*, or that *ἐκ* always means *out of*; and if such be not their invariable import, it may not be in this case; hence the evidence for immersion founded upon this source cannot be conclusive. As Mr. Watson has observed: "*Εἰς* is spoken of place, and properly signifies *at*, or it indicates motion toward a certain *limit*; and for any thing that appears to the contrary in the history of the eunuch's baptism, that limit may just as well be placed at the nearest verge of the water as in the middle of it."

That *εἰς* frequently, in the New Testament as well as elsewhere, means to cannot be denied by any candid scholar. Peter is commanded to "*go (εἰς) to the sea*, and cast a hook." Matt. xvii. 27. Surely he was not to go *into*, or *under*, the water. Our Lord, it is written, "*went up (εἰς) to a mountain*." Did he go *into* its heart, or *under* it?

But it is only wasting time to delay with criticisms about these Greek prepositions. Allow, for the sake of argument (which is *fair*

from being true), that *εἰς* always means *into*, and *ἐκ* *out of*, allow that in the instance before us *εἰς* can mean nothing but *into*, or even allow that it means *under*, what can the cause of immersion gain by this admission? It would be as destitute of proof as ever. Indeed, if immersionists could prove that the preposition here means *into*, or *under*, in the sense of immersion, they would most effectually overturn their own cause. They would clearly demonstrate that Philip did not baptize the eunuch by immersion. The text reads: "They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch." Now mark, all this was done before the act of baptizing commenced. Whatever the act of baptizing was, it was something neither synonymous nor simultaneous with the "going down *to*, *unto*, or *into*, the water." Now, if "going down *into* the water" implies immersion, then it follows that "both Philip and the eunuch" were already *immersed*, or *under* the water, before the act of baptizing commenced; consequently, if baptism means immersion, they were already baptized—that is, if "going down *into* the water" means immersion, then the eunuch was immersed before he was immersed, which is a contradiction, or immersion is not baptism, which destroys the immersionist's doctrine. The immersionist must either admit that "going down *into* the water" is not immersion, or that immersion is not baptism; for it is certain that the act of baptizing was performed after they had gone "down into the water." Surely it must be plain that, as the baptizing was an act subsequent to the going to the place at which it was performed, neither the method of going to the place nor the character of the place, whether it was in a *house* or in a *river*, in a *wilderness* or in a *city*, in a *palace* or in a *pool*, can determine any thing as to the mode of the baptism. I may go *up into* a house, and then proceed to baptize, either by pouring, sprinkling, or immersion. The fact of my being in the house would not of itself decide the question as to the mode of administration. Even so Philip, with the eunuch, "went down *to*, *unto*, or *into*, the water; and he baptized him." But *how* he performed this act—whether he dipped the water up in his hand or in a cup, and whether he poured or sprinkled it upon him, or whether he immersed him once, twice, or three times, and whether he did it backward or face foremost—these are questions concerning which the text gives us no information.

There are, however, one or two circumstances connected with this transaction which furnish some presumptive evidence *against* immersion. The eunuch, at the time Philip entered the chariot with him, was reading a certain portion of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the *Messiah*. In connection with the paragraph he was reading are these

words: "So shall he sprinkle many nations," etc. It is said: "Philip began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." Now, it is clear Philip must have instructed him concerning the duty of baptism, or he would not have asked it at the hands of Philip; and if so, we can find nothing in the scripture under review so likely to lead to discourse on that subject as the verse referred to, "So shall he *sprinkle* many nations," etc. This passage doubtless depicts the sanctifying grace of the gospel with which the nations were to be blessed, and which is sacramentally symbolized by the baptismal water. But in reference to this subject the prophet does not speak of *immersion*, but of *sprinkling*. If the prophet had used *immerse* instead of *sprinkle*, and written "So shall he *immerse* many nations," how many immersionists would now clap their hands over it as a proof of the eunuch's immersion! But as it is, it furnishes presumption in favor of sprinkling.

Again, the manner in which the eunuch requested baptism is worthy of notice. It is said: "As they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Now the report of all travelers is, that that region of country is exceedingly dry, and that there is no stream to be found in the route more than ankle deep. Connect this fact with the eunuch's exclamation, "See, here is water," or, as it is in the Greek, "Behold, water," and who can help believing that the eunuch had suddenly discovered a spring, or small branch, and with emotion calls the attention of the apostle to the fact, and demands the ordinance of baptism? It is not probable that there was any stream, or pool, there of sufficient depth for immersion, and of course the probabilities here apparent are against that mode.

5. Next, we notice the baptism of *Saul*. This transaction is thus recorded by St. Luke: "And he received sight forthwith, and *arose, and was baptized.*" Acts ix. 18. St. Paul, in relating the history of the matter, represents Ananias as coming into his presence and addressing him, saying: "And now why tarriest thou? *Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*"

Now, we venture the assertion that if a hundred unprejudiced persons, who had never heard of any controversy as to the mode of baptism, were, for the first time, shown these scriptures, and asked for a verdict as to the attitude of Saul when he received baptism, every one of them would arise from the perusal and exclaim, "He was *standing* on his feet in his room, where Ananias found him." Circumstantial as the account is, recording the fact of his *rising* to his feet, and then par

taking of refreshments, and being "strengthened" in his weak condition of body, yet there is not one word of their going to one of "the rivers of Damascus" in search of a place for immersion! Whether he walked, rode, or was carried—whether they traveled one, two, or three miles, or only a few furlongs—whether Saul endured well the fatigue, or fainted by the way—not a hint or syllable about any of these things do we hear! Why this silence? The natural and rational conclusion is, that no such journey was undertaken or thought of. Right on the spot, in the house, where he *arose* and *stood*, *then* and *there* he was baptized. This is the rational conclusion from the New Testament history of the affair. The word *ἀναστὰς*, used in both the recitals of the baptism, literally signifies *the act of rising up*, or *standing up*, and, plainly as language can express it, denotes the bodily attitude in which the baptism was received. Hence, if our opinion is to be founded on the Bible account, we must set this down as a case in which the probabilities, amounting almost to positive proof, are against immersion.

6. *Cornelius*, and "*his kinsmen and near friends*," in the city of *Cesarea*, furnish us the next instance of baptism to be considered. The account is related thus: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Acts x. 44-48.

We cannot help perceiving a most striking correspondence between this, the first great Gentile baptism, and the Pentecostal baptism of the Jews, already noticed. In the one, St. Peter had opened the gospel kingdom to the Jews; in the other, he opened it to the Gentiles. In both cases the baptism of water and that of the Holy Ghost are so intimately connected as plainly to indicate that there is an important relation between them. In both instances the Holy Ghost was *poured out*, or *fell upon* them. Upon any principle of symbolism, the hypothesis of immersion is inadmissible. The purifying Spirit is poured out, which would expressly indicate the application of purifying water in the same way. But look at the brief history of the case. Peter demands, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" None daring to object, "he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Is there any suggestion to leave the room they occupied? Is there any suggestion about a pool, bath, pond, river, or any thing of the sort? There must be water, for without it there can be no baptism; but is there the slightest hint that there must be water enough to immerse them, else

they cannot be baptized? Is there any hesitation, any delay, any confusion, by reason of a sudden and unforeseen demand on Cornelius for a large and deep body of water? or does not the irresistible impression of the scene indicate a demand for a small portion of water for instant use? Is there any intimation of any spectacle, any procession through the streets of Cesarea—the Roman centurion with near friends, his kindred, his devout soldiers, and his domestic servants, led by Peter and six Jews from Joppa—to a public immersion, all speaking strange tongues, and all Cesarea filled with wonder? Nothing of the sort—nothing that can be tortured into correspondence with any such ideas. They are the growth of other ages—the product of a state of mind far different from that of the apostles of the Lord. However great, perhaps unexpected, may be the issue of this Gentile baptism, it is plainly the will of God that it should be celebrated; and it is done—done *there, then, with* water, not *into* it. (Dr. R. J. Breckinridge.)

All the circumstances of the case seem rationally to preclude the idea of immersion. But when we consider the manifest connection in this case between the baptism of the Holy Ghost and that of water, the one cleansing the soul from the pollutions of sin, and the other symbolizing the same by an application of water, and when we also remember that the mode of this spiritual baptism was *pouring*, not immersion—when we consider *all these things*, the argument against immersion is little short of demonstration.

7. The baptism of the *Philippian jailer* is the last Scripture instance of the ordinance we shall notice. The account of this is recorded in the sixteenth chapter of The Acts.

1. It is important to notice that the jail here consisted of two apartments; for the apostles were “thrust into the *inner* prison;” hence there was an *outer* prison. 2. The jailer’s own residence was connected with the prison so closely that from his sleeping chamber he could see when the doors were open into the “*inner* prison;” for as soon as he awoke he saw that the prison doors were all open. 3. The jailer, springing in with a light, brought the apostles from the *inner* to the *outer* prison. *Here* the apostles preached, here the jailer was converted, and *here*, it seems, the apostle’s stripes were washed, and the jailer received baptism.

But the question is, by what mode was this baptism administered? In the absence of all testimony to that effect, it is certainly unreasonable to suppose that in this pagan prison there was any pool or tank ready prepared for immersion. Hence, if there was any immersion in the case, they must have left the prison and gone out in quest of some

river or pond. Some of the presumptions against this supposition may be briefly stated.

1. It is unreasonable to suppose that the jailer, just recovered from his terrible alarm about the supposed escape of his prisoners, could have been induced, so soon afterward, in violation of law, to lead these same prisoners through the city and to the suburbs, or neighborhood, in search of river, pool, or pond, for the administration of an ordinance of which, till that hour, he had never heard.

2. It is unreasonable to suppose that the inspired Paul, who so strictly enjoined upon all to be "subject unto the higher powers," and "to obey magistrates," would have been accessory to so palpable a violation of law as this night-excursion, on the part of the jailer, would have involved.

3. When, in the morning, "the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go," and Paul was informed of the fact, he replied, "They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out." Nor did the apostles consent to leave the prison till the magistrates came and legally released them. Then "they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia."

Now, we demand, can this conduct of the apostles, amid the light of the morning, be consistent with the supposition that they had already, under the dark cover of midnight, not only left the prison, but wandered off, none can tell how far, in search of a place for immersion? However men may convict themselves of absurdity in defense of a theory, let them beware how they thus involve the holy apostles in hypocrisy and crime! Relying on the Bible statements alone, we conceive it scarcely possible that the jailer was immersed.

III. SCRIPTURE ALLUSIONS TO BAPTISM.

1. That all the dispensations of true religion, the patriarchal and the Mosaic, no less than the Christian, referred to and centered in Christ, and were intended to develop, with more or less distinctness, the Messianic kingdom, cannot be doubted. In the Mosaic economy, where scarce a single ceremony or service was without an important significance in connection with the glorious revealments of the plan of gospel salvation, who can suppose that the constant and habitual use of water and blood was either accidental or unmeaning? For the ratification of the Sinaitic law, half the blood of the sacrificial offerings was sprinkled upon the altar, and the rest upon the people. In the performance of this sprinkling, Moses said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which

the Lord hath made with you." By express statute, the ceremonially unclean Jews were sprinkled with the water of purification. Upon the great day of atonement the high priest sprinkled blood upon the mercy-seat over the ark.

In addition to all this, look at the striking symbolic announcements of the prophets in reference to Messiah's reign. Hear the language of Isaiah: "So shall he sprinkle many nations." Listen to the yet more graphic strain of Ezekiel: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." Viewing all these things together, may we not expect to find, under the gospel, something of which they were lively symbols? If the legal purification, under the former dispensation, was manifested by the sprinkling of water upon the people, and the sprinkling of blood upon the altar, how appropriate that, under the gospel, the sanctification of the heart should be procured through the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," made efficacious by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and that the outward symbol of this should be the baptismal water!

Conformable to the same prominent idea are the teachings of the New Testament. St. Paul says: "Ye are come—to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of *sprinkling*, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Heb. xii. 22, 24.

If, then, all through the law, we find the *sprinkling* of blood and of water so familiarly connected with purification, and, under the gospel, the baptism of water so directly associated with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, how could a Jew, in the absence of direct precept to the contrary, fail to conclude that water baptism was intended to symbolize that moral cleansing which is effected by the affusion of the Holy Ghost and the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ?" Equally manifest must it be that if the one baptism is constantly represented by sprinkling or pouring, the other should be administered in the same way. There should be a correspondence between the symbol and the substance—the external sign and the internal grace. Admitting that water baptism is administered by affusion, how striking the harmony between the covenant spiritual blessings of redeeming grace and the external ceremony by which they are symbolized! Discard sprinkling and pouring, and institute immersion as the only proper baptism, and how can we fail to perceive that much of the harmony and beauty, symmetry and coherence, of the external forms and internal grace of the gospel system are destroyed, and the types and shadows of the law shorn

of their efficacy and despoiled of their significance as adumbrations of "good things to come"!

2. The next *Scripture allusion* to which we refer is that in which it is contended that baptism is presented as *emblematic of the burial of Christ*.

This has been prominently urged by immersionists as one of their strongholds. The texts referred to are the following:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; for he that is dead is freed from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." Rom. vi. 3-8.

The same apostle again says: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; *buried with him in baptism*, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Col. ii. 11, 12.

We have been thus full in our quotations of these texts that the connection may at once be the more distinctly seen; for it is only necessary to observe closely the connection, and the sense will be obvious. The first inquiry here to be made is this: To which does the apostle, in these passages, refer—*water baptism* or *spiritual baptism*? We take the position that so to construe these texts as to make them refer to *water baptism* is one of the most glaring perversions of Scripture of which we can conceive. Such a construction would turn the apostle's beautiful argument and illustration into a perfect medley of nonsense and confusion. That this may be at once apparent, let us inquire what are the specific effects of this baptism?

(1) It produces "death"—"buried with him by baptism *into death*." Now, does *water baptism* produce death? If so, it must be either the death of the *body*, or the death of the *soul* "*unto sin*." If we say the former, then the body must be *drowned*; if the latter, then *water* will supersede the blood of Christ and the Spirit's influence.

(2) This baptism enables us to "*walk in newness of life*." "Even so we also should walk in newness of life." Now, we ask, are we enabled thus to walk by *water baptism*? Nay, but by *spiritual baptism*.

(3) This baptism so plants us in "the likeness of Christ's *death*," as to cause us to be in "the likeness of his *resurrection*." Can water baptism do this? Can it cause us to *die to sin* as Christ died on the cross, or to lead a *new life* of obedience, resembling our Saviour's resurrection from the tomb to die no more?

(4) This baptism crucifies "our old man" (or carnal nature) "with Christ." Is this the effect of *water* baptism? Who can believe it?

(5) This baptism destroys "the *body of sin*." Is this the effect of *water* baptism? Surely it is the "renewing of the Holy Ghost"—spiritual baptism—and not *water*, which can accomplish this work.

(6) This baptism releases us from the *service of sin*. "That henceforth we should not *serve sin*." What but *spiritual* baptism can effect this deliverance?

(7) This baptism produces the *circumcision of the heart*. "Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands." Now, will any one contend that immersion can *circumcise* or *change* the heart?

(8) This baptism "puts off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;" that is, in this baptism all past sin is pardoned through faith in Christ—not by *water* baptism, but by the influence of the Spirit.

(9) From this baptism we are raised "through the faith of the operation of God;" but from *water* baptism, by the *hands of the minister*.

(10) In this baptism we are "quickened together with (or through) Christ, and we gain the "forgiveness of all our trespasses"—effects which can result *only* from spiritual baptism.

Let any reflecting mind ponder seriously upon the *effects* here enumerated, compare them with the scriptures quoted, and mark how explicitly it is taught that they all result from the baptism spoken of, and then determine whether or not these are the effects of water baptism. He who can believe that water baptism can effect all this mighty moral and spiritual renovation may dispense with the "blood of atonement" and the "renewing of the Holy Ghost," and trust in the *water alone* as his redeemer and sanctifier. To what perversion of Scripture may the devotees of error be driven!

Nothing can be plainer than the fact that in these passages the apostle was discoursing of the "*burial*" of the "*body of sin*" by the "baptism of the Holy Ghost," and not the *burial of our bodies* in *water baptism*. Of the effects enumerated as resulting from the baptism of which the apostle discourses, not the *first one* can be produced by water baptism, but *every one of them* results from spiritual baptism; hence it is not the former, but the latter (which was by *pouring*), of which it is

written, "We are *buried with him by, or in, baptism.*" And thus this boasted proof of immersion is shown to be imaginary; for it can only appear when Scripture is perverted, and so construed as to do violence to its proper connection and obvious import.

3. When driven from his strongholds, the immersionist, as a last resort, turns upon his opponent and charges him with the error of holding to and practicing *three baptisms—sprinkling, pouring, and immersion*; while the Bible teaches, "*one Lord, one faith, one baptism.*" Eph. iv. 5. "Now," exclaims the Baptist, "if *immersion* be baptism, then neither *sprinkling* nor *pouring* can be baptism; and if *pouring* be baptism, neither *immersion* nor *sprinkling* can be baptism; and if *sprinkling* be baptism, then neither *immersion* nor *pouring* can be baptism; and he who practices *pouring, sprinkling, and immersion, practices three baptisms*; whereas the Bible allows but *one.*"

This charge of inconsistency may *seem* plausible, but it is, in reality, perfectly groundless. It is founded upon a perversion of the text referred to. The object of the apostle was not to teach any thing concerning the *mode* of baptism; his object was to inculcate the duty of Christian fellowship and brotherly love. "*Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" This is the practical lesson he is enforcing, and he urges it on the ground of a sevenfold unity which pervades the Christian system. His argument is this, because there is "*one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God,*" therefore "*keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*"

There is but *one* baptism. Ye have not been baptized in the profession of different religions, nor yet in the name of different Lords. One of you was not baptized in the name of Paul, another in the name of Cephas, and another in the name of Apollos; but all have been baptized in the name of the same Lord—"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Ye have all this *one baptism*; therefore "*keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" As to the *mode* of the ordinance, however much we may prefer the one to the others, as the Scriptures have not explicitly prescribed *one* to the exclusion of all others, let each one "*have the choice of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.*"

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIV.

- QUESTION 1. What is the doctrine of the "Methodist Discipline" as to the *mode* of baptism?
2. From what *three* sources is the scriptural argument derived?
 3. What is the *Greek word* in the New Testament for baptism?
 4. How is it *defined* by lexicographers?
 5. Does this settle the controversy?
 6. Can it be settled by the etymological argument?
 7. Are there any *instances* in the New Testament in which the Greek word for baptism *cannot* mean immersion? and what are they?
 8. By what *mode* were "our fathers" baptized unto Moses? and how is it proved?
 9. What is the argument for immersion founded on "John's baptism"? and how is it answered?
 10. What is the argument for immersion founded on the "baptism of our Lord" by John? and how answered?
 11. By what *mode* was the baptism of the "Holy Ghost" administered? and how is this proved?
 12. To what two methods have immersionists resorted to ward off the force of this argument?
 13. How was the Pentecostal baptism of water probably administered? and how is it proved?
 14. What is the argument for immersion founded on the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch? and how is it answered?
 15. State the argument in reference to the baptism of Saul.
 16. In reference to the baptism of Cornelius and his friends, what is the argument?
 17. How were the Philippian jailer and his household probably baptized? and how is this proved?
 18. How were Lydia and her household probably baptized? and how is this shown?
 19. What argument against immersion is founded on the *symbolic allusions* of the Old Testament?
 20. What is the argument for immersion founded on St. Paul's expression, "Buried with Christ *by, or in, baptism*"? and how is it answered?
 21. What is the *last resort* of the immersionist when driven from his strongholds? and how is his charge of inconsistency against Pedobaptists shown to be groundless?

CHAPTER XV.

THE LORD'S-SUPPER—ITS ORIGIN AND NATURE.

I. ITS ORIGIN.—This we give in Scripture language. The inspired record is found in the following passages, viz.:

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Matt. xxvi. 26-29.

"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them; and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Mark xiv. 22-25.

"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Luke xxii. 14-20.

The apostolic comment upon this institution is recorded in the following scriptures, viz.:

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion

of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." 1 Cor. xi. 23-28.

II. We next consider the NATURE of this ordinance.

Having presented from the several evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the inspired record of the origin and appointment of this institution by our Lord himself, and from the First Epistle to the Corinthians the apostolic comment upon the same, we have clearly before us the substance of the teachings of Scripture upon the subject.

The *first* question here demanding our attention is this: In what sense should the phrases, "This is my body," and "This is my blood," be understood? The Roman Catholics interpret these words in the most literal acceptance; and contend that, by the prayer of consecration said over the elements by the priest, the *bread* is no longer *bread*, and the *wine* no longer *wine*, but that they have been converted into the *literal* body and blood of Christ; and thus they originate the absurd figment of transubstantiation. But little need be said to evince to the unbiased mind that their position upon this subject is both unreasonable and unscriptural.

1. It is *unreasonable*. It is a maxim of unquestionable truth, both in philosophy and religion, that whatever is palpably repugnant to common sense must be *false*. Now it is clear as any truth can be that the prayer of consecration can effect no change in the physical properties of the bread and the wine. They are still *bread* and *wine*, *literally* and *really* such, as much after the consecration as before it; and chemical analysis may readily demonstrate the fact. If so, they are not *literally* the *body* and the *blood* of Christ; and thus it manifestly appears that transubstantiation is *unreasonable*, because repugnant to the dictates of common sense. Romanists may persuade themselves that they believe it; but really they do not, they *cannot*.

2. Transubstantiation is *unscriptural*.

It is a rule of interpretation, admitted by all sound biblical critics, that no scripture should be interpreted in a manner contradictory to common sense, or plain reason, when obviously susceptible of an interpretation not liable to such objections. That figurative language is frequently used in Scripture, none can dispute; and that *bread* and *wine*, in the phrases under review, were intended by our Saviour as *figures*, *emblems*, *symbols*, or *representatives*, of the body and blood of Christ, and not *literally* such, is the plain obvious construction. How could the disciples understand their Lord as teaching them that the *bread* was *literally* his body broken for them, or the *wine* *literally* his blood shed for them, when they saw his body yet whole, not nailed to the cross, and his blood not yet flowing from his pierced side? Christ said to his disciples: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Did they understand him as teaching that *he* was *literally* but a *grape-vine*, and *they* but *twigs* growing upon that vine? St. Paul says, in reference to the Rock that followed the Israelites in the wilderness, "*That Rock was Christ.*" Was Christ a *literal* rock? The plain interpretation is this: the *rock* was a *type*, or *emblem*, of Christ; the *vine*, in its relation to the branches, *figuratively represented* the relation of Christ to his disciples; and so the *bread* and the *wine* were *symbols*, or *representatives*, of the body and blood of Christ.

But little better than this error of the Romanists is the doctrine of *consubstantiation*, which teaches that although the bread and the wine are not *literally* the body and blood of Christ, yet that his body and blood are *literally present* with the elements in the Supper, and are *literally* received by the communicants.

Among the leaders of the Lutheran Reformation, some—and Luther himself was one of them—leaned too far toward transubstantiation. They seemed unable to take at once so bold a leap on the subject as to escape entirely the errors of the papists. It is true that consubstantiation, for which they contended, delivered them from the grosser absurdities and the idolatrous tendencies of the system they renounced. They did not place themselves in direct conflict with men's external senses, nor were they led to the idolatrous adoration of the *bread* and the *wine*; but still they leaned too far toward the *literal* interpretation, holding that the communicant did *literally eat* the body and *drink* the blood of Christ, which was always, in a manner inexplicable, present with the elements.

Others, led by Carolstadt and Zuinglius, went to an opposite extreme, attaching no farther import to the words, "This is my body,"

and "This is my blood," than that the elements were merely *signs*, or *figures*, assisting the faith to apprehend the absent body and blood of the Lord. This view is in close correspondence with that of the modern Socinians.

The true scriptural view of the subject, as we conceive, lies between these two extremes, and was advocated by Calvin, and is now the creed of the Protestant Churches generally. While it rejects the *literal* presence of the body and blood of Christ, as held by Luther and the abettors of consubstantiation, it admits with Carolostadt and Zuinglius that the elements are signs, symbols, or figures, of the literal body and blood of Christ. But it goes one step farther. It considers the elements not only as a *sign*, but also as a *seal* of the new covenant. This idea appears to be implied in the words of Christ, "This cup is the *new covenant in my blood*;" and in the words of Paul, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

Hence we conclude that, in this ordinance,

1. No change is effected in the elements; the bread and the wine are not *literally the body and blood of Christ*.

2. The body and blood of Christ are not *literally present with the elements*, and received by the communicants.

3. But the elements are *signs*, or *symbols*, of the body and blood of Christ, serving as a memorial of his sufferings on the cross and a help to the faith of the communicant.

4. The elements also possess a *sacramental* character, being a divinely appointed *seal* of the covenant of redemption. As the blood of the paschal lamb served as a seal of this covenant under the old dispensation, pointing the faith of the Israelite to the coming Redeemer, it was fit that, as the *old* dispensation was now to be superseded by the *new*, the seal of the covenant should be correspondingly changed; hence at the conclusion of the last authorized Passover, the holy supper is instituted, as a *perpetual memorial* and *abiding seal* of the covenanted mercy and grace of God, till the Saviour "shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XV.

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| <p>QUESTION 1 In what scriptures is the origin of the Lord's-supper set forth?</p> <p>2. How do the Romanists understand the terms, "This is my body," and "This my blood"?</p> <p>3 What is the correct interpretation of them?</p> <p>4 Who advocated <u>consubstantiation</u>?</p> | <p>and wherein does it differ from <u>transubstantiation</u>?</p> <p>5. How may both these theories be refuted?</p> <p>6. To what opposite extreme did Zuinglius and his party go?</p> <p>7. What is the scriptural view of the subject?</p> |
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Transubstantiation - That the wine and bread are really transformed into the blood and flesh. (Trans - substance)

Consubstantiation - That the blood and flesh are with the wine and bread. [Con (with) - substance]

Eucharist - to flesh - Communion.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LORD'S-SUPPER—THE RIGHT TO PARTAKE OF IT CONSIDERED.

WE next inquire, *Who have a RIGHT to the Supper of the Lord?*

We present it as a Bible position, standing forth prominently to view, that

All real Christians—that is, all who are “the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus”—have a divine right to membership and communion, embracing full fellowship, with the privilege of the Lord's-supper, in every Church, or congregation of Christians, among whom their lot may be cast.

This proposition will be found to contain the principle according to which the great question of Christian communion now before us may be clearly and satisfactorily settled. Before we bring the proposition to bear directly on the question, and exhibit, in all its important aspects, its connection with the subject of Christian communion, we should weigh the proposition itself in the balances of the sanctuary. We bespeak for it a careful investigation and a fair trial. If it be unsound, let it be at once rejected; but if it be according to the teachings of Heaven and the principles of eternal truth, let us plant ourselves upon it, as on a sure foundation, impregnable and indestructible as the “word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”

We now appeal to the Scripture testimony to learn *who they are* that have a right to the fellowship of the Church, to the immunities and privileges of the house of God, to the communion of the Supper of the Lord. If we trace the entire history of the planting of the Church, as laid down in The Acts of the Apostles, we shall find in the apostolic administration but one invariable practice upon the subject. Such as “gladly received the word,” such as “believed,” not only on the day of Pentecost, but on all subsequent occasions, were without exception and without delay admitted to the communion and fellowship of the Church. This was done too, not on the ground of their perfect agreement in all their views of Christian doctrine, or ordinances, or Church order, but *solely* on the ground of the *fact* that they were sup-

posed to have been made partakers of the spiritual benefits of Christianity "by faith in Christ Jesus."

It is indeed surprising that there should be thought any plausible ground for diversity of sentiment among Christians as to the true basis of Christian communion, after we have looked upon the clear and unmistakable apostolic platform exhibited upon the subject in the fifteenth chapter of The Acts of the Apostles. Here we find the apostles and elders assembled in solemn council to adjudicate upon the very question we are now discussing. *Their decision*, and *the grounds upon which it was based*, are committed to record. This record remains as an imperishable memorial which should never be overlooked—a light to shine upon the pathway of the Church in all succeeding generations.

The history of the case is this: There arose in the Church of Antioch a dissension on the subject of communion. Certain Judaizing teachers from Jerusalem had visited them, and troubled them much with some of their close communion principles. They had taught them that there was a certain rite, ceremony, or ordinance, which many of them had neglected, that was essential to salvation, and of course that such as had hitherto neglected this ought not to be admitted to the communion and fellowship of the Church. Paul and Barnabas opposed strenuously these close communion teachers, and the sectarian and schismatic principles they were inculcating. But still, for a complete and more authoritative settlement of the matter, it was agreed that Paul and Barnabas, and some other disciples, should go up to Jerusalem, and call the apostles and elders together for the decision of the question. We have the record of their *decision*, and the *reasons of it*. Now we invite special attention to the *grounds* of this decision. It was a question of communion and fellowship, identical with the very question now before us. The question was whether certain Gentiles, claiming to be Christians, though they had neglected a certain ceremony which some contended was essential, should be recognized as Christians, and admitted to communion. The decision is in favor of their admission. But what are the *grounds* of that decision? What are the *specific reasons* upon which it is based? We answer, They are precisely the same that are comprised in the proposition we have laid down as the basis of Christian communion, and which we are now endeavoring to establish by Scripture testimony.

It ought to be strictly noted on this subject that we here have an infallible, an inspired touch-stone, or clue, for the settlement of the communion question, whenever, wherever, or however, it may arise; for if these persons, whose right to Church-communion is contested, are admitted to

communion on certain grounds, and those grounds are specifically stated, it necessarily follows that in all cases of contested right of communion, whatever may be the ground of the objection, *the same reasons specified in this case would establish a similar right, and require a similar decision.* But what are these reasons? St. Peter, in pleading the right of these Gentiles to communion, declares: "God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us." Here, God is appealed to as a witness for the Gentiles of their claim to communion, on the ground that *he* had "given them the Holy Ghost"—that is, he had conferred on them the spiritual blessings of Christianity—they had received the converting power of the gospel—"even as he did unto us"—that is, they enjoy the same spiritual religion with us; consequently they are entitled to the same Church privileges. But St. Peter goes on: "And put no difference between us and them, *purifying their hearts by faith.*" Here the plain argument of St. Peter is this: these Gentiles are true believers, they are genuine Christians, they are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" consequently they have a right to the privileges and fellowship of the Church.

Now, we ask, will not the same argument prove the same thing in all similar cases? If *these* have a right to Church-communion *because* "their hearts are purified by faith," must not all whose "hearts are purified by faith," or all who are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," have a right to Church-communion? *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

St. Peter still proceeds: "Now, therefore, why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." Here the argument for their right to communion is grounded upon the fact that all are believed to be heirs of a similar salvation.

After St. Peter had closed his argument, St. Paul and St. Barnabas next spoke on the same side of the question, and using a similar mode of reasoning. They appealed to the fact that God, through their instrumentality, had "wrought miracles and wonders among the Gentiles." In other words, they argued, God has conferred upon the Gentiles the spiritual blessings of Christianity, therefore they have right to the external privileges and ordinances of the Church. Here, let it be remembered, there is not one word about the peculiar notions of these persons concerning doctrines and ordinances, about "baptisms and the laying on of hands"—no, nor about any thing else, but the simple fact

of their *conversion to God*. *This, and this alone*, was the ground upon which their right to communion was affirmed. This fact no man dare deny.

If we turn our attention to the Apostolic Epistles, we find frequent reference to the same platform of communion. St. Paul (see 1 Cor. x.), in commenting on the Lord's-supper, says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are *one bread*, and *one body*; for we are all partakers of that one bread." We subjoin for the better understanding of this passage a few extracts from leading commentators. Dr. Clarke says: "As only the one loaf was used at the Passover, and those who partook of it were considered to be *one religious body*, so we who partake of the eucharistical bread and wine, in commemoration of the sacrificial death of Christ, are one spiritual society, because we are all made partakers of that *one Christ* whose blood was shed for us to make an atonement for our sins, as the blood of the paschal lamb was shed and sprinkled in reference to this of which it was the type. All who join together in celebrating the Lord's-supper, and are partakers of that one bread, give proof by this that they are Christians, and have fellowship with Christ." Whitby paraphrases as follows: "For we being many are one bread, and one body (or, because the bread is one, one loaf being broken for us all, we who partake of it being many are one body, owning ourselves thereby all members of that body of which Christ Jesus is the Head); for we are all partakers of that one bread; and thus you see that by partaking of this Christian sacrifice we own ourselves to have communion with the Lord Jesus, and with the *whole society of Christians*." Macknight paraphrases thus: "The cup of blessing for which we bless, is it not the joint participation of the body of Christ?"

In reference to the passage under review, we may remark that it affords clear evidence, first, that all the disciples of Christ are *one body*, represented by the *one loaf*. Secondly, that all who belong to that *one body*—that is, all Christians, or believers—have a right to partake of that *one communion*. Thirdly, that all who partake of this communion in a proper manner, not only commune with Christ, but with the whole body of Christ, or the entire Christian Church. Fourthly, that all who have communion with Christ, the Head, have a right to communion with his entire body, or with the whole Church of believers; hence we derive from this passage another proof of the correctness of our position. It clearly demonstrates that all Christians have a divine

right to the communion and fellowship of the Christian Church; and this right is based *alone* upon the fact that *they are the children of God*.

In Romans xiv. 1-3, we read as follows: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth; for *God hath received him*."

On the third verse, Dr. Clarke remarks: "Both, being sincere and upright, and acting in the fear of God, are *received* as *heirs of eternal life*, without any difference on account of these religious scruples or prejudices." Whitby remarks: "'God hath received him'—that is, into communion with him, viz., by giving them that Spirit which is the medium of our union to and communion with him." Here we perceive a clear recognition of the same basis of communion. A question arose in the Church at Rome whether certain professed Christians, who had partaken of meat which had been offered in sacrifice to idols, ought to be admitted to the communion of the Church. St. Paul decides in their favor; but on what *ground* does he render that verdict? He bases it *alone on the ground* that "*God had received them*." No allusion is made to ordinances or peculiar notions of doctrine. The *fact* that God recognizes them as his children is presented as the great, the *only*, *thing required* as an indispensable prerequisite to communion.

In the twelfth chapter of Romans and the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians the Church is represented as "*one body* in Christ," and all the Christians—that is, all who have been "baptized by one Spirit," or "made to drink into one Spirit"—are represented as members of that "*one body*," and "*every one members one of another*." It is commanded that there be "*no schism in the body*." So intimate is the union and communion here inculcated that all the members are required to "*have the same care one for another*," and mutually to participate in the sufferings and honors of each other. If "*one member suffer*," all the members are required to "*suffer with it*;" if "*one member be honored*," all are required to "*rejoice with it*." What language could be plainer, or more direct to the point in hand, than the above? The union and communion of all Christians is here enjoined in terms which must imply full fellowship in the closest and the strongest sense of the word.

But again, we ask, what is the *ground* upon which this fellowship is founded? Is it because they harmonize in their views of doctrine, of Church polity, or of external forms and ceremonies? Not one of these things is so much as named. However important, in view of *other*

considerations, these things may be when the *right* and *obligation* of Church-fellowship are in question, they are not so much as hinted at; but that right and obligation are based *wholly* and *solely* upon the *fact* that they are partakers of the spiritual benefits of religion, that they are Christians, or members of the spiritual body of Christ.

The Scriptures might be quoted much more extensively still in confirmation of the same position, but any farther testimony we deem superfluous. From what has been presented, we persuade ourselves that the candid and impartial will readily perceive that the Scriptures themselves amply sustain the proposition which we have laid down as a basis for the settlement of the great question of Christian communion.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XVI.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. On the <i>right</i> to the Lord's supper, what general proposition is laid down?</p> | <p>2. What is the argument founded on the fifteenth chapter of The Acts?</p> <p>3. What other Bible proofs are presented in favor of free communion?</p> |
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CHAPTER XVII.

OBJECTIONS TO FREE COMMUNION ANSWERED.

1. It is objected that "*the free communion proposed is impracticable because of the diversity of opinion respecting the institution of baptism.*"

The leading principles already established, if duly considered, fully refute this objection; yet the subject will admit of some farther discussion. A large portion of those who hold to immersion as the only valid baptism, contending also that baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to the Lord's-supper, refuse to commune with, or to admit into their Churches, any unimmersed persons. In considering this question we have no need to discuss the *mode* of baptism. However that question may be decided, it cannot affect the subject before us. The question of Christian communion rests on entirely different and distinct grounds. The Bible, as we have shown, places the right and obligations of communion, not on ordinances and ceremonies connected with religion, however important in themselves, but on *the fact of conversion and adoption into the family of God "by faith in Christ Jesus"*—on the fact that "God has received them." If it be decreed that all who are within a certain house have a right to partake of a rich banquet provided for all the inmates, how ridiculous it would seem for those within the house to begin to quarrel with each other about the mode of entrance! If it be admitted that the invitation was to all within the house, how utterly absurd would it be, when the table is spread, for some to refuse to partake because others, acknowledged to be *within the house*, had not entered in the manner judged the most proper! To be within the house at the time is the only condition required; and that they have entered by some method is certain from the fact of their presence within. To contend, therefore, either that they are not within the house, or that, although within, they have no right to partake, is alike absurd and ridiculous.

If it be admitted, as we have proved, that it is the duty and privilege of all Christians to commune at the table of their common Lord, how absurd must it be for *some* to refuse to commune with *others* because certain rites connected with their religion are thought to have been not

properly performed! Admit that they are the children of God, and their right to commune is at once settled; deny this, and none can plead for that right.

We may farther argue the right of all Christians to the communion of the Lord's-supper from the *origin* of the institution itself. It was not established by the founder of a sect or party. It originated not with any of the ancient Fathers. It was not set up by any of the Popes or councils of Papal Rome. Neither Martin Luther nor John Calvin, neither Cranmer nor John Knox, neither John Wesley nor Andrew Fuller, nor any other reformer or leader of a party, ever pretended to have originated this institution. They knew their places—they knew the Scriptures better. Hence, we affirm that this is no *sectarian* or *denominational* institution. The very idea of an Episcopalian, a Methodist, a Presbyterian, or a Baptist communion-table, is absurd and monstrous; it is a burlesque upon the institution itself! This holy ordinance claims paternity in no denomination of Christians. It was instituted and ordained by the *one* Christ and Lord, the Saviour of all his people, and for and in behalf of all his followers of every name and order, wherever found or however circumstanced. With what propriety, therefore, can any *one party or denomination* of Christians claim the right to exclude any of God's children from *his own* table? Who gave them that right? Where, in all the book of God, do they find authority for this lofty prerogative? Were it a Presbyterian or a Baptist table—were it a mere *denominational* arrangement—had it originated with a sect or party, the assumption might be less unreasonable; but, as it is, it is perfectly absurd and ridiculous! The scriptures we have adduced, establishing the *right* of all the children of God to the table of the Lord, are abundant and explicit. If they do not establish that point beyond doubt or cavil it will be difficult to place any sensible comment upon them. How, then, we ask, can we admit that any man is a child of God, and yet deny him the privilege of partaking of that one loaf in the Supper? To proceed thus is not to be guided by the Scriptures, but audaciously to push them aside!

Where, we may well inquire, is any divine authority for any man, or set of men, to sit in judgment on the case of others, to determine whether they may be admitted or not to the Lord's-table? The apostolic rule on the subject is, "Let a man examine *himself*, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." 1 Cor. xi. 28. Paul is not to examine Peter; and Peter, John; and John, James, etc.; but Paul, Peter, John, James, and all the rest, must each one *examine himself*. For self-examination, in view of the Lord's-supper, there is express Bible war-

rant; but for brother examining brother, there is *none*. Whoever assumes this prerogative has usurped an authority for which he can show no credentials.

We know that close communionists plead that *baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to the Lord's-supper, and that immersion is essential to baptism*, and that, therefore, they cannot, conscientiously, commune with unimmersed persons.

This plea looks plausible, and if it be sound, it will go far toward vindicating them from the charge of inconsistency with themselves. But when this argument shall be closely examined, it will be found halting on both legs. It is defective in both the premises and conclusion. First, not to moot the *mode* of baptism, which is of no consequence in this controversy, it cannot be *proved* that baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to the Lord's-supper; but were we, for the sake of argument, to admit it, and to admit also that there is no baptism but immersion, it would not *necessarily* follow that no one holding these sentiments could, conscientiously, commune with an unimmersed person. It is enough for each to be the keeper of his own conscience.

We shall now endeavor to show the defect in both the premises and conclusion in this argument. *First*, in the *premises*, it has been assumed that baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to communion; but this the Scriptures nowhere expressly teach. This fact the close communionists are compelled to admit. Were it otherwise, they would long since have presented their express Scripture to establish their position. But this, I believe, they have never attempted; but they have relied solely on inference and deduction.

Now, as baptism and the Lord's-supper are both *positive* institutes, and, as Protestants believe, the only divine ordinances of the new institution, it would seem passing strange, judging *a priori*, if there be such a connection between these two ordinances that baptism *must* in all cases precede the Supper, that there should be no express precept to this effect. Such would be an exceedingly loose method of presenting a *positive* institute. The Mosaic law, which was as the shadow to the substance, compared with the gospel, was minute and particular in describing the persons who had right to the privileges of the Jewish temple and altar. But shall we suppose that Christ and his apostles, in setting up and ordering the new—the better—the everlasting dispensation, have left the matter so loosely described that the persons entitled to the immunities of this latter and better house are only to be determined by mere inference?

Again, we think we have amply proved, by express testimony from

Scripture, that all the "children of God by faith" have a right to the communion. Consequently, it would follow, if none but the immersed have a right to the communion, that no others can be the children of God. But this close communionists will not, *dare* not, affirm. By so doing they would unchristianize, and leave to the uncovenanted mercies of God, the entire body of the Pedobaptist Churches—yea, the great mass of the Church of God—for centuries together. At such a conclusion the heart of humanity shudders. Close communionists will not adopt it; therefore the only alternative left them is either to admit that baptism is *not* essential to the communion, or that immersion is *not* essential to baptism. Which will they choose? Will they stoutly set themselves against all the declarations of Scripture showing that all the children of God have a right to the communion? Will they deny that there are any of God's children among the millions who, in the successive ages of the Church, have lived and died—many of them martyrs to the faith—without immersion? Will they give up their cherished idea that immersion *alone* is baptism? or, finally, will they admit that their inference, that baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to communion, has been drawn in haste?

It was a primary and all-important object with our Saviour that all his followers should be united in the most harmonious fellowship. Hence, had *he* considered baptism an indispensable prerequisite to that fellowship, would he not have rendered the subject so plain that no honest and sincere disciple, in any age of the world, could ever so far mistake as to suppose he had been baptized when he had not? Would he not have taken special pains so to define and explain the matter that throughout all coming time "the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein"? We cannot reconcile it with our conceptions of God as a being of infinite wisdom and goodness, that he has left the great mass of his children so much involved in doubt and uncertainty on a subject so vitally important.

The close communionist would infer the correctness of his position—that baptism must precede the Lord's-supper—

(1) First, from the *order* in which these institutions were originally established.

He argues that "baptism was established *prior* to the Lord's-supper, therefore no one should be admitted to the Supper till he has been baptized." Although this plea was set up by the celebrated Booth in his "Apology for the Baptists," we really cannot help considering it too flimsy to merit a serious reply. But lest it might strike others with more force than it does us, we pay it a respectful notice. The rea-

soning is rotten in all its parts. First, the position assumed is false. It is not *true* that the *Christian* baptism was established prior to the Lord's-supper; and if the reference is to any *other* baptism, it is foreign to the subject. It is the *Christian* baptism alone of which we are speaking, and consequently, if any other baptism be referred to in the premises, the argument is the most glaring sophism imaginable. If *one* baptism be referred to in the premises, and *another* in the conclusion, then the argument would run thus: something called baptism originally preceded the Lord's-supper, therefore something else entirely different, also called baptism, should always precede the Lord's-supper. Who does not perceive that there is no connection between the premises and the conclusion? You might as well argue that John *Jones* owes you a shilling, and that therefore John *Smith* owes you a shilling. There is about as much connection between Jones and Smith as there is between the *Christian* baptism and those baptisms that preceded it. They are no more identical than are Jones and Smith.

John's baptism preceded the institution of the Supper, and so did the baptism our Saviour authorized his disciples to perform at the commencement of his ministry. John was a mere harbinger. His ministry preceded the Christian dispensation and passed away. His baptism, and that of the disciples of Christ before his crucifixion, were "unto repentance;" but the *Christian* baptism was "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"—or more briefly, "into the name of Christ."

The Christian baptism was instituted by the Saviour after his resurrection from the dead, in his grand commission to the apostles. (Matt. xxviii. 18-20.) Without delaying to argue so plain a point, we observe that it is only necessary to know that John's disciples were rebaptized when they embraced the gospel, as may be seen from apostolic history, and its *essential* difference from Christian baptism must be admitted. (See Acts xix. 1-5.)

Thus it appears that the argument for the indispensable precedence of baptism to the communion of the Supper, based upon the supposed priority of the former institution, rests entirely on a false assumption. The truth is, the Supper was instituted before the crucifixion, and the Christian baptism not till after the resurrection of Christ. When the institution of the holy Supper was originally founded, the Christian baptism had never been heard of on earth. It only existed in the mind of Him who knew all things. And of all that company to whom the Saviour himself administered the holy Supper, though they were a band of ministers, *not one of them had then received the Christian baptism!*

And yet it is argued that Christian baptism must, in all cases, precede the Supper! Is this following the example of Christ? Is it not inverting the order he established? Is it not subverting the order of things as they came fresh from heaven, and practicing upon a plan directly opposite to the example of him who was the founder of both institutions?

It will occur to the reflecting mind that while the advocates of close communion, could they have shown that baptism preceded the Supper, would thereby have gained nothing to their purpose, yet the establishment of the fact that the Supper preceded the Christian baptism is fatal to the close communion argument. The mere fact that the Christian baptism was instituted before the Supper, had such been the truth of the history would not have proved that baptism in all cases *must* precede the Supper. The order of time in which any two institutions originated will not, of itself, demonstrate that they must necessarily always succeed each other in the same order. It must first be shown that there is a necessary connection between them, either in the nature of things or by divine appointment, rendering that same order always indispensable. On the day of Pentecost the people were exhorted to be baptized, with the promise that they should receive the Holy Ghost. At the house of Cornelius the Holy Ghost first fell on them, and they were afterward baptized. In these two instances the order of events was reversed. But we demand, How is it possible that baptism can be an indispensable prerequisite to the Supper, when, as we have seen, in its first institution under the direct administration of the great Head of the Church, we are furnished with an example in which the Supper preceded Christian baptism? The position that Christian baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to the Supper must be relinquished, or the truth of the gospel history of these institutions must be set aside. Let those concerned choose their own position.

(2) Again, the close communionist appeals to *apostolic precedent* to prove that baptism must always precede the communion. He argues that the apostles never admitted to the communion an unbaptized person, and that, therefore, no others ever should be admitted. To this we reply that it never has been and never can be *proved* that the apostles never admitted to the communion an unbaptized person. The premises in this argument have been assumed without demonstration. We admit with great pleasure that, so far as appears from The Acts of the Apostles, it was their general practice to administer baptism to converts immediately upon their profession of Christianity. But this is as much as can, with certainty, be affirmed. It is nowhere said that this was the

invariable practice. No man can affirm from the Scriptures either that it *was* or that it *was not*. Nor does it matter at all, so far as the present question is concerned, which way that point be decided, or whether it be decided at all. The question now involved is not whether all Christians *should* be baptized immediately on their profession of Christianity or not. This all parties admit and contend for. The point involved in controversy is, whether the neglect of baptism from an honest misunderstanding of the subject necessarily deprives of the *right*, and releases from the *obligation*, of communion. Is there any apostolic precedent deciding *this* point? No such precedent exists. No such case ever occurred, so far as we are informed in Scripture, for apostolic adjudication and decision. Admitting that all to whom the apostles administered the Supper had been baptized, this could not demonstrate that baptism must, in all cases, necessarily precede the Supper without a precept to that effect, unless it could be shown that the circumstances under which the apostles acted would always continue essentially the same. The fact that the apostles performed any given act in a specific way, under certain specific circumstances, will not prove that they would perform it in the same way when those circumstances are essentially changed. Indeed, it is certain they would have varied their conduct to suit the essential change in the circumstances of the case. And if the apostles themselves would have varied their course under an essential change of circumstances, their mode of action in the given case cannot be considered a precedent binding others to the same mode, when those circumstances have essentially changed.

But we ask, Have the circumstances in the case before us essentially changed? Close communionists admit that they have. They admit that in the apostolic day all real Christians were baptized, and that there are many thousands of the most pious and exemplary of the present day who have never (according to the views of close communionists) been baptized at all. If, then, in the apostles' day *all Christians were baptized*, and in the present day they are *not all baptized*, it is most certain that the circumstances have essentially changed; and if so, the apostolic precedent here claimed, if admitted to exist, cannot apply to the case in hand; consequently, the argument from this source is refuted.

It is a very easy matter, however, to show that the apostolic precedent, and that confirmed, too, by express precept, is altogether on the other side. It is certain that the apostles admitted all "believers"—all *true Christians*—to the communion. This none can deny. Close communionists are free to admit it; but it is equally certain that close communionists do not receive all "believers"—all *true Christians*—to

their communion. This they are also free to admit. And hence it necessarily follows that their practice in this particular, and apostolic precedent, sustained too by apostolic precept, are in direct antagonism. They never can be reconciled.

There must of necessity be some *standard*, some *principle*, or *rule*, by which to determine who *ought* and who *ought not* to be admitted to communion. The apostles, it is agreed on all hands, admitted all "believers." The general tenor of Scripture, yea, numerous express passages plainly and explicitly teach that it is the duty of all "believers" to extend fellowship and communion to the entire "household of faith." On the other hand, while it may be conceded that the apostles admitted none but baptized persons to the communion, it is not contended that there is a direct precept teaching that none but *such* should, under any circumstances, be admitted. It is, therefore, most evident that the *standard*, or *rule*, by which the apostles were governed in admitting persons to communion related not to *baptism*, but to *faith*. Their principle was not to admit the *baptized* because and in virtue of their *baptism*, but the *believers* because and in virtue of their *faith*. If they admitted none but *baptized* persons, it was because all the "children of God" were baptized. Their admission or rejection turned not upon the question of their *baptism*, but upon the question of their *adoption* as "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Again, admitting that the apostles everywhere, both by precept and precedent, enjoined upon all Christians the duty of attendance upon both the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's-supper, by what mode of reasoning do we arrive at the conclusion that a *neglect* of *one* duty releases from the *obligations* of *another*? We are commanded to "search the Scriptures," and "to hear the word of God;" but will any man say that we are to be prohibited from the *one* because we have omitted the *other*? We are commanded to repent, to believe, to seek, to ask, to love God, to love our neighbor, to love our enemies, to visit the sick; but who would argue that a *neglect* of any *one* of these duties releases from the *obligation* of *another*? If it be said that these duties are separate and distinct, having no such connection as necessarily to require that in all cases the *one* should precede the *other*, to this we reply, Let it be *proved* that there is such a connection between baptism and the Lord's-supper that the former is an indispensable prerequisite to the latter, and the dispute is ended. But this can never be shown. Indeed, we are sure there can be no such connection, for *in the very origin of the Supper it preceded Christian baptism*.

(3) Close communionists plead, in justification of their exclusive

practice, that "many of the Churches around them are loose in their discipline and modes of receiving members; and they think it wrong to commune where perhaps they would meet at the table with unworthy persons." The first reply we make to this objection to free communion is this: It is very questionable whether those close communion Churches would have any the advantage in a comparison of membership in view of moral and religious character with most of those Churches whose fellowship they reject. The presumption is, that the "tares and the wheat" would be found growing together in quite as unfavorable proportion among them as among most other denominations. At any rate, it savors too much of that Phariseeism condemned by our Saviour for one denomination, having no just claims to peculiar sanctity, to say to all others: "Stand off, we are holier than you."

But this sensitive dread of meeting at the table of the Lord some unworthy communicant is based entirely upon a false assumption. It seems to grow out of a supposition that a sincere and upright believer, by meeting at the table an unworthy brother, would thereby become contaminated. No position can be more erroneous than this. In approaching the table of the Lord, each Christian goes on his own responsibility. "To his own Master he standeth or falleth." It is his duty to "examine *himself*, and not *his brother*; and if *he* is unworthy, his going to the table of the Lord will avail him nothing. However holy the persons may be with whom he mingles, their righteousness can do him no good. On the other hand, if *he* be worthy, if *he* be sincere and honest, humble and devout, his approach to the table of the Lord will be an acceptable service. However unworthy portions of the communicants may be, their unrighteousness can do him no harm. Did our approach to the table of the Lord involve us in the sins of all the unworthy communicants with whom we may mingle, we might never be able to commune with safety. How can we certainly know, whether we commune at home or abroad, in this or the other Church, that there *may* not be a deceitful hypocrite at the table? We can have no guarantee for our protection in a single instance upon this supposition.

But look one moment at the arrogance of this position: Afraid to approach the table of the Lord, lest you might meet there an unworthy brother, one whose polluted character might soil the pure white robe of your own spotless righteousness; and yet the immaculate Saviour of the world condescended to commune at the table with Judas Iscariot, knowing him to be a devil! Are you so much better than the Saviour? Is the servant so far above his Lord? Is Christ not too good to "eat the bread and drink the wine" with him who meditated the be-

trayal of his innocent blood, ready most shamefully to barter it for "thirty pieces of silver"? but is a poor sinful worm—one who scarcely dare look up in the presence of that almighty Saviour—too holy to humble himself to commune with his brother?

(4) Close communionists, when driven from every other subterfuge, often try to excuse themselves from communing with other denominations on the ground that *it would offend their brethren*. "We have a Church-rule," say they, "which prohibits us from communing with other denominations; and were we to do so, it might offend many of our brethren." We are persuaded that this plea, though never urged, so far as we know, by ministers, or writers on the subject, is doing more than any other one thing to bolster up the system of close communion. It therefore merits a serious consideration.

The remarks of our Saviour in the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew on the subject of "offenses" is often relied on by close communionists as furnishing a vindication of their course in refusing to commune with other denominations. Our Saviour says: "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea." This is the principal if not the only text on which they seem to rely as vindicating their conduct. There are two acceptations in which the English word *offense* may be taken. It may mean simply to *wound the feelings* of another, or cause him to feel *sorrowful*, or it may mean to put a *stumbling-block* in his way, so as to *cause him to sin*.

The word *skandala*, here rendered *offenses*, signifies *stumbling-blocks*. The sense is this: whoso putteth a *stumbling-block* in the way of his brother, so as to cause him to *fall into sin*, etc. It is very clear that rendering a brother sorrowful by reproving him for his sins cannot be *offending* him in the sense of the text. Were we thus to construe it, St. Paul would be brought under the malediction; for *he* made the Corinthians *very sorry* with a letter. The only sense which can be put upon the text with consistency is that which we have given above. We may therefore conclude that this scripture was never intended to prevent the Christian from reproving the sins and endeavoring to correct the errors of his brethren, however much it might grieve them, provided he proceed in that gentle manner, and is actuated by that Christian spirit, which the gospel enjoins.

St. Paul reproved St. Peter because he "was to be blamed." Christians are exhorted to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." The great foundation question for the Christian to settle

at the tribunal of his own judgment and conscience is this: What is *true*? what is *right*? This being decided, his line of duty is plain and direct. He must contend for the *truth*, and do what is *right*, leaving the consequences with God.

Now if the close communionist is convinced that all Christians, according to the Bible platform, ought to commune together—if he is satisfied that this is in accordance with the genius of Christianity and well-pleasing to Heaven, he is most sacredly bound to use his utmost influence to promote that object, be the consequences what they may. How *can* he do this, while by his own practice he sanctions the very opposite? It might be a question of prudence whether he should first withdraw from a Church that will not allow him to commune with others before he proceeds to the violation of the rule of that Church; but it can be no question with him whether he should continue to practice upon the close communion principle. He has already decided that the practice is unscriptural.

The declaration of the apostles, when prohibited from preaching in the name of Jesus, now comes home to him with all its force. "We ought to obey God rather than men." Therefore, to such as refuse to commune with other denominations because their Church-rule forbids it, we now say: Will you make void the law of God through the traditions of men? In the great matter of Christian communion, are you prepared to violate your own views of what is *right*, merely to please erring brethren? Is it better to offend the entire "household of faith" (except your own denomination) by doing *wrong*, than to offend a portion of that denomination by doing *right*? Are you so much afraid of offending a few erring brethren, that to avoid it you will do *wrong* yourself, and yet so willing to give offense to all the people of God beside, that you will offend them rather than do *right*? In one word, are you unwilling to offend your brother by doing *right*, and yet willing to offend God, your Saviour, by doing *wrong*?

It is only necessary for the great body of lay members, united with close communion Churches, who have long been convinced of the impropriety of the practice of close communion, led by some noble-minded Robert Hall, to resolve to follow out in practice those principles of free communion which their consciences approve, and a blow will soon be struck that will cause the citadel of bigotry to tremble to its center, and thousands of God's dear children, who have long dwelt in the same land, aliens and strangers to each other, will flow together in the arms of pure Christian fellowship and brotherly love,

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XVII.

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| <p>QUESTION 1. What is the <i>first</i> objection to free communion, and how is it answered?</p> <p>2. How is it proved that baptism is not an indispensable prerequisite to the Lord's-supper?</p> <p>3 How is it shown that apostolic precedent is against close communionists?</p> | <p>4. What is the plea of close communionists, founded on the discipline of other Churches?</p> <p>5. How is this plea answered?</p> <p>6. What is their excuse, founded on their Church-rule?</p> <p>7. How is it shown to be untenable?</p> |
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